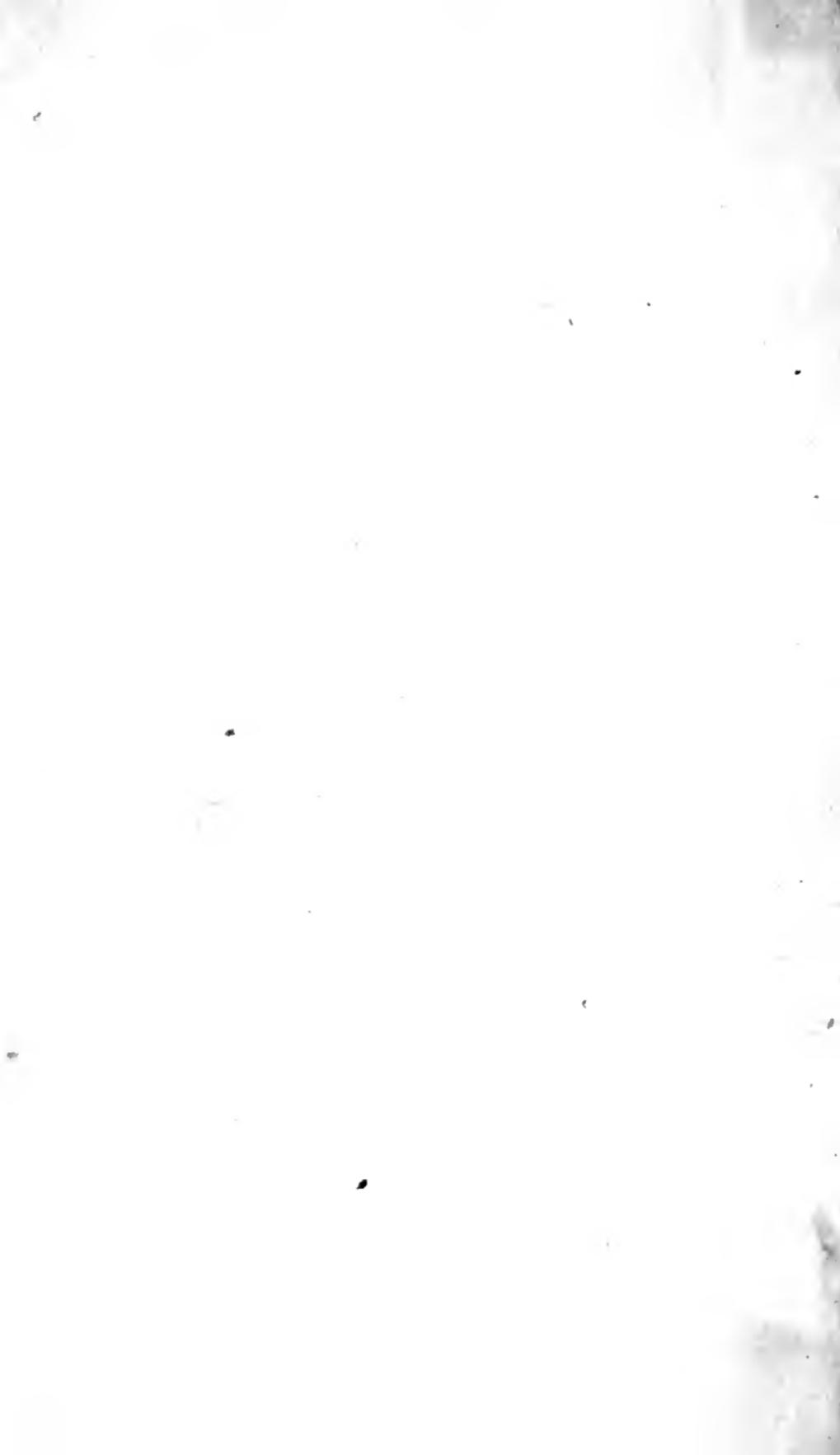


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# R E A L I T I E S.

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*NOT A NOVEL.*

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# REALITIES,

NOT A NOVEL.

A TALE FROM REAL LIFE.

In Four Volumes.



BY THE AUTHOR OF

*CORRECTION, DECISION, REFUGEES, &c.*

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God only knows who is a hypocrite and who is not: at the great general review of us all, at the day of judgment (and not till then), it will be seen who have done their duties in this world, and who have not, and we shall be advanced accordingly.

STERNE.

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VOL. I.

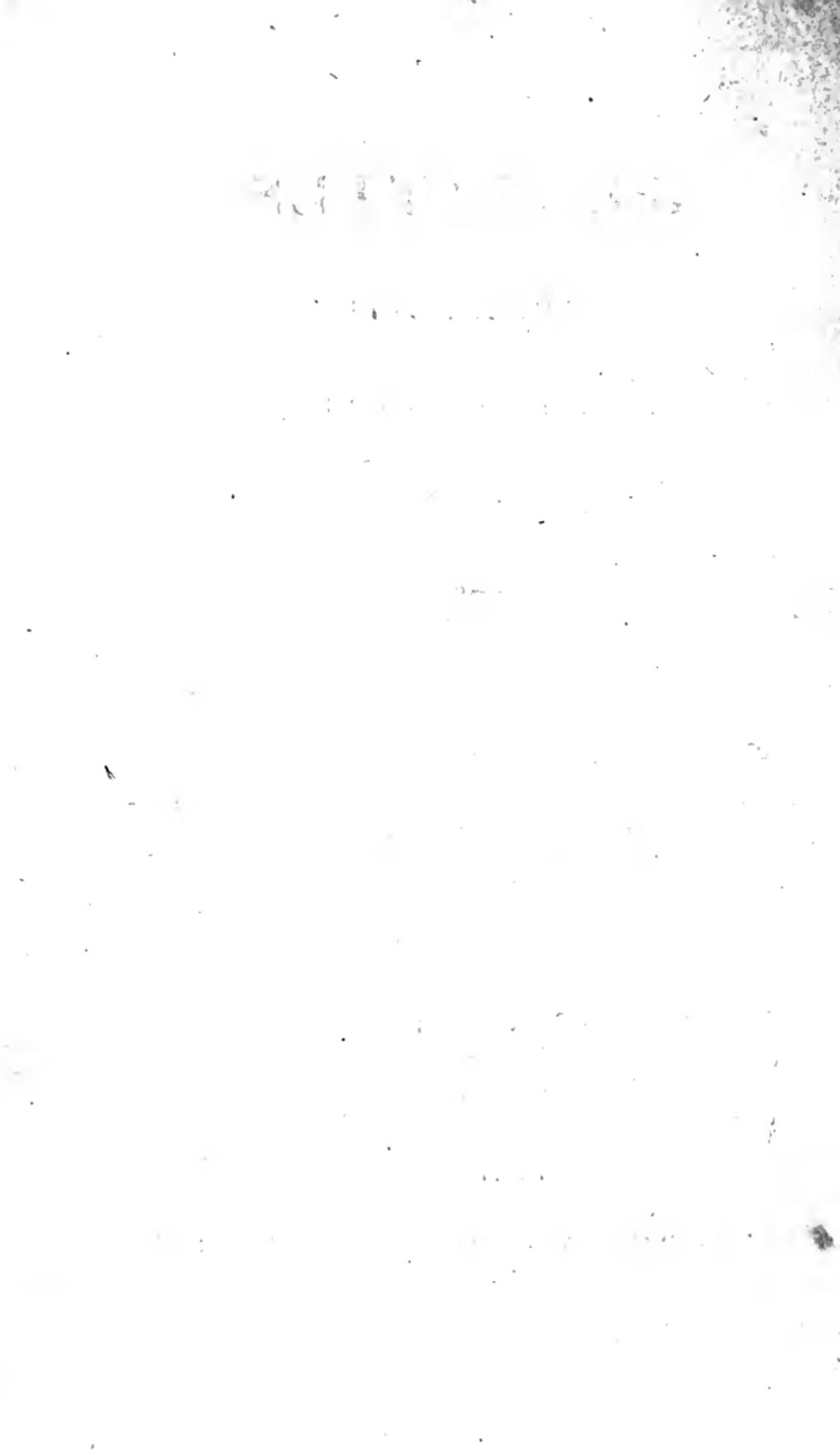


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## P R E F A C E.

WHEN admiring the easy manner in which a popular modern author, in the preface to his "second series," treats those who are ever ready to fit the cap to their own heads, secure in my own insignificance, I little fancied how soon I might wish to appropriate his sentiments to my own use. One however, who ought to have known better, having obtained a sight of the following sheets, has been at no little pains to seize the fool's-cap of youthful inexperience, and strain it over his own mature and time-bleached head, and with far more genius than truth, to cast the *dramatis personæ* according to his

his own fancy. Now I beg to be understood, by the very, very few who may feel interested in the affair, that though my characters are sketched from nature, they are single figures, taken from distant and different groups, and totally free from personalities. To him who fits the cap, I must say, that my generous Edward St. Orme is the only sufferer by the attempt.

In offering this little work to the public, I again entreat that indulgence so liberally bestowed on those who, at least, avoid doing harm by their writings; if my “Tale” prove not a tale of wonders and of horrors, nor the characters monsters of iniquity or monsters of perfection, let it be considered they are such as nature, not the author, made them; and this will perhaps plead their excuse, and render my simple tale of plain truth instructive as well as interesting.

resting. It has been written with the hope of usefulness—of conveying a moral lesson, in a more pleasing form than by stricture or essay, of pointing out the necessity of subduing our own passions and feelings, and of placing a firm reliance on Divine Providence, however adverse its dispensations may appear. The incidents are all gleaned from memoranda, made during a life whose “varied hues” has offered abundant opportunity for observation, and are all strict to the letter; and while the field of nature offers such a plentiful harvest to the moral writer, the necessity of resorting to fiction surely ceases; the sufferings, the virtues, the follies, and the vices, of our fellow-beings, are certainly as interesting, and, to say no more, as harmless, as the creatures of fancy and the scenes of a vivid imagination, though not quite

quite so faultless; if therefore the faults of Augusta should rob her of the charm of Heroineism, let my youthful readers bear in mind, that she is not of Utopian creation, but that, like themselves, she lived, loved, and suffered, and now suffices “to point a moral, and adorn a tale.”

My store of memoranda is by no means exhausted; and should this meet the kind patronage bestowed on former works, I promise the lovers of novelty and chitchat not to weary in their service. I may likewise make them the same promise I once heard a member, returned for the seventh time, make his constituents—“If I *can* do you no good, I *will* do you no harm.”

BATH, *August 1825.*

INTRO-

## INTRODUCTION.

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"WELL, I really think that, go where I will, there is nothing to be found after all half so cheerful and comfortable as our own fireside of a cold winter evening," exclaimed the lively Edith Townsend, as drawing her chair close to the table that constantly occupied a place opposite the fire, and opening her well-stored workbox, she proceeded to arrange its somewhat disordered contents.

"Such an observation from you, Edith, quite surprises me. You have, for the last month, been continually writing such long letters, lavish in praises of Exeter, and the society you found there, that I almost began to fancy home must be a

very humdrum sort of place, and you a very enviable girl, enjoying what I could picture only in imagination as gay and delightful," replied her sister Sarah, with a look of mingled astonishment and contempt.

" And Edith is an enviable girl," said her brother Henry, laying down his flute, and turning from a handsome grand piano to which he had been inviting his sister Sarah; " she enjoys the present moment, thinks little of the future, and still less of the past; but there is not a gleam of sunshine, a butterfly, or a daisy, that does not impart some portion of its beauty to her active mind and warm imagination; to Edith the world will always be a paradise—to you, Sarah, I fear but a thorny wilderness, although your qualifications are certainly higher than any my pretty Edith can boast."

" And after all this eulogium, Henry," replied the father of the family, " it is but a sorry compliment you pay your pretty Edith,

Edith, to admire her thoughtlessness only ; had you now brought forward her cheerful industry, her patient perseverance, as objects of admiration, then indeed one might have listened to you. See with what industry she labours to restore order to that workbox, so emblematical of her own mind, filled with the useful and the useless—glittering in gay colours, without order or arrangement ; then her patient perseverance in that happy look and smile of content, as if all this concerned her not."

" Nor does it, dear father," rejoined Edith, in the happiest tone of perfect good-nature ; " you all need amusement ; and if any thing in or about me can give it, take it and welcome ; I can enjoy every thing but gloomy silence ; conversation I doat on, whether gay or serious ; and if the contents of my head are a little *derangée*, still, dear father, you allow there *are* contents, and time perhaps, aided by my *patient perseverance*, may work wonders,

and produce order where hitherto disorder has reigned queen of the empire."

Mr. Townsend kissed the polished forehead of his lovely daughter, as he passed her to retire to his study.—“ I am sorry to leave you,” said he, with a benevolent smile; “ but I have letters that require answering, and business must not be neglected, even to enjoy the badinage of my tall boys and girls.”

“ I think,” said Mrs. Townsend, as her husband closed the door after him, “ you all stand a fair chance of becoming spoiled children; so much indulgence at home—such a doating father! and then these visits to Exeter afford dear Mrs. Dunstanville a fine opportunity of gratifying your every wish, and her own benevolent heart, at the same time. Sarah, yours must be the next visit; I fancy it is all holiday while any of you are there, and Henry and Edith have had their share.”

“ Why I certainly go there less than any of you, particularly since George left home,”

home," replied Sarah; " yet I know not why, for Mrs. Dunstanville considers us all as her own children, and never appears so pleased as when her own three, and two or three of us, are around her; but she has such excellent spirits for ever, I often think it is impossible she *can* ever have known so much trouble or care as I have sometimes heard you and my father speak of."

" On this head I must beg leave to correct you, Sarah," interrupted Edith; " your observation proves how little you know our mother's old friend. The fact is, that Mrs. Dunstanville is naturally very cheerful, and possessed of excellent spirits; but she wears the brow of care, and I have frequently observed, with sorrow, what swollen eyes and languid looks she has brought to the breakfast-table; but one sprightly sally from Alfred, or affectionate inquiring look from Henrietta, will recall her smiles, and with a surprising effort you soon see her recover, and be the

first to promote any little plan of amusement or instruction, as if she thought it a sin (as I really believe she does) to anticipate time one instant in clouding the brow of youth, or damping their present joys, by a single sombre hint. Then, as she sometimes says, it would be cruelty quite to let any thing like gloom pop its grim aspect among us the very short time that poor Alfred can snatch from study and toil; his chambers are sure to be dull enough—his mother's house should never be so."

" My dear mother," resumed Sarah, " you have often promised us the history of your friend's 'eventful life;' do pray oblige us by it; for I confess I cannot now reconcile grief and disappointment with Mrs. Dunstanville's generally happy, easy deportment; it appears to me that such visitors must leave their impress deeply written on the countenance, and tincturing every look and word."

" You shall be obliged, Sarah," replied  
her

her mother; “ my friend Augusta not long since placed a manuscript in my hand, to be reserved for her own children, with permission for you to read it. The perusal will occupy some time ; and though it will open wounds scarcely yet healed, and bring to memory circumstances now fading from remembrance, and which perhaps it were wisdom in me quite to forget, yet, while I learn lessons of fortitude and self-control from my friend’s example, I shall experience a melancholy pleasure in retracing scenes which have so abundantly exercised those virtues in her.—Henry, you shall, if you please, read the manuscript aloud ; you will then learn to know the man your father loved with more than brotherly affection, and of whom he cannot even now speak without the strong emotion you have often witnessed.”

Henry gladly complied with his mother’s desire; the manuscript was produced, the ladies took out their needle-work, and Henry commenced his reading.

But as the *lectuer* was often interrupted by sundry exclamations, the appearance of supper, &c. and as the families were frequently blended in the narrative—to avoid these inconveniences, as well as the frequent repetition of personal pronouns, we shall take the liberty of telling Mrs. Dunstanville's story our own way, only promising to “nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.”

**REALITIES.**

# REALITIES.

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## CHAPTER I.

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"Where humble happiness endear'd each scene."

AUGUSTA St. Orme was the eldest daughter of an honest, upright merchant, who marrying early in life the object of his warmest affections, entered on the world with very little beyond high respectability, and unimpeached integrity; but as they were both persons of good family, and surrounded by affluent relations, it was little suspected by the circle in which Mr. and Mrs. St. Orme moved, how shallow their pecuniary resources were, nor how difficult the young couple

found it to keep up appearances, and pay every man his own.

Mrs. St. Orme, but too happy in finding herself the wife of the only man her heart had ever acknowledged, to whom she was devotedly attached, and for whom she was prepared to endure all things, felt neither care nor privation. Her house was always neat and clean—her finely-formed person displayed the contents of an elegant if not abundant wardrobe; and the smiles of unclouded happiness constantly illumined her naturally brilliant eye, and played around a mouth that uttered lively sallies, and was enthusiastic in its praises, but never spoke of a confined income—satirical, haughty relations—cold friendship, nor all the thousand ills that flesh is heir to, though few were doomed to suffer more severely from them in private.

Mr. St. Orme, handsome, gay, and insinuating, like his wife, appeared in possession of all this life can offer to sweeten the bitter draught. Of the difficulties arising

arising from a small capital, where a large one is particularly requisite, he spoke only to his affectionate and faithful wife; her commiseration and advice were always ready—her smile chased present care, and her strong faith firmly pointed to better days. It was observed among the fashionable part of their acquaintance, that Mr. and Mrs. St. Orme were seldom to be met at places of gay and expensive resort; that their parties, though very elegant, were seldom, and never very large, and that they *never* played cards; but nobody for a moment suspected that honest prudence influenced their conduct, or that indulgence in expence would be ruinous to them.

The young couple were both passionately fond of the country—Nature in all her varied garbs delighted them; and when Mrs. St. Orme declared the song of the nightingale afforded her a thousand times more pleasure than the song of madame Mara—that the skipping of the

young lambs was infinitely more agreeable to her than the evolutions of an opera dancer—and the voice of her husband reading, more delightful than Kemble and Siddons, nobody for an instant doubted her assertions, or thought her choice *outréée*; but the young ladies almost envied her a husband and companion, who could thus impart a charm to the most insignificant subject; and the young men thought, if St. Orme were not happy, the search after happiness would be more fruitless than the search after the philosopher's stone; while, by sage old ladies and gentlemen, they were considered as patterns to all who were desirous of hazarding the cares attendant on the marriage state.

The first year of St. Orme's married life passed on with scarcely the shadow of a cloud to dim its brightness: true, by their respective families they were considered as poor, treated as visionaries, and regarded with a slight mixture of contempt. St. Orme's

Orme's sisters would ironically admire Anna's *elegant taste* in the disposition of her furniture, and with smiles inquire how all these pretty baubles would agree with a *wicker cradle and nursing-chair*, which must soon be introduced into the drawing-room, since it was impossible she could afford the expected blessing a separate servant and apartment.

But such shafts fell harmlessly on Anna; she knew what she had married, and was prepared for that lot, which they did not attempt to ameliorate, and which Anna was determined they should not embitter; one only grief sat at Anna's heart, and that with heroic fortitude she completely stifled: her husband, for whom she was willing to sacrifice life itself, discovered symptoms of disease, that to the quick eye of affection spoke volumes of danger and distress; the colour that glowed on his cheek was too brilliant—the fire that shone in his dark eye was too vivid—his appetite required indulgence, and his temper was become fitful

fitful and uncertain, as acted on by his animal spirits, which drooped or rose as the sun or clouds prevailed. To procure him indulgences, Anna, who would not allow any temptation to carry her expenditure beyond the boundary fixed by the most rigid economy, denied herself many comforts that her situation required, and laboured hard to manufacture the infant paraphernalia from the contents of her own wardrobe.

Ever anxiously watchful, some little delicacy daily tempted his sickly appetite, some little amusement was ever ready to enliven and cheer his failing spirits, a smile welcomed him home, and a look of tenderness bid him adieu; still the burning cheek, dry hand, and almost imperceptible cough, tormented the fond wife. St. Orme however assured her he felt free from pain, and was hourly growing stronger; and if her judgment was not convinced, her love taught her to hide all apprehension of mischief. But anxiety and privation are bad nurses. Poor Anna,  
after

after many hours of extreme pain and danger, gave birth to a stillborn infant, while her own safety hung as by a thread ; yet she tenaciously clung to life, that she might administer comfort to her husband, whose disappointment and dejection evidently increased every alarming symptom.

Mrs. St. Orme's dear friends and relations crowded round her, to deplore and congratulate. Some admired the elegant simplicity of her dress ; others, the beauty and order of her house and garden ; others, the delicacy of her complexion ; while all agreed in thinking her the happiest of wives and women ; but none, no, not one, discovered the aching, anxious heart, hidden beneath those smiles and dimples, or that her fears wrote *Tekel* on every comfort that surrounded her ; though Miss Clara St. Orme, who had the misfortune to be a beauty, proud and envious, possessing, in an eminent degree, the faculty of wounding as she wished by the biting severity of her observations, told her *dear sister*,

sister, she was happy to see her bear the loss of her little girl with such fortitude, for it was her mother's firm opinion that St. Orme would shortly follow ; she therefore did well to reserve all her strength for a more severe trial ; " and we have been thinking," continued she, " what you will then do with this handsome house ; but I suppose you will dispose of it, and return to your father in the country, or, perhaps, take some genteel situation."

" Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof, Clara ; we will not therefore anticipate. Surely the hand that afflicts can heal, and it is a wise and merciful hand," returned the half-dying wife, who, while her *kind* sister-in-law had been speaking, endured tortures ; but her confidence in a supreme Being was not to be shaken, and her penetration enabled her readily to detect the envious feelings that gave birth to such cruel observations.

Mrs. St. Orme recovered from her confinement, but did not regain her strength.

Anxious

Anxious to curtail every expence, the nurse was discharged, and every appearance of sickness removed, with a precipitation highly injurious to a constitution naturally delicate. The winter also proved unusually severe, and St. Orme growing rapidly worse, the best medical assistance was called in to his aid ; but the cough gained strength, and the symptoms increased in defiance of medicine.

\* What Mrs. St. Orme had long foreseen and dreaded as the signal of death now took place ; the fatigues of business were greater than the invalid could encounter. By his medical attendants he was peremptorily forbidden to weary himself with it, and a milder climate recommended as a last resource. Under such circumstances, what was to be done ? the fiat was unalterable, yet still the fond couple lingered near that home which had been to them an Eden of bliss, from which, like the first pair, they were now expelled. They had no debts, and had always appeared in circumstances

of

of the greatest ease, though it was well known that as a merchant, Mr. St. Orme had hitherto done but little; little therefore did the benevolent physician, when he hastened Anna St. Orme, both on her own account and her husband's, to quit that high situation, and seek a more genial clime—little did he think the pain he caused, or the utter impossibility there existed of removing, until their finances were improved by collecting every thing due to them, and by the sale of the house and furniture. In this Anna was ably assisted by an active friend, who saw with admiration and pity what exertions the heroic wife was making to preserve her husband's mind in tranquillity, while her own heart was bursting and her health sinking.

On recovering from those long fainting fits to which she had lately become subject, her first anxious inquiry was always for St. Orme. If he knew nothing of her indisposition, all was well; for to hide from him every thing that vexed or distressed

tressed him, was now her first care and concern. In a short time, however, every preparation was complete, and the young people were about to depart—"The world before them where to choose, and Providence their guide;" and this best of guides directed them aright; they soon found themselves comfortably settled in a pleasant part of the south-west of England.

The very circumscribed state of their finances forbade extravagance, or even indulgences; but they lived in genteel lodgings, kept one servant, and still maintained an appearance that would not have discredited the most opulent of their relations. By those relations they were, however, but little noticed; some trifling present, accompanied by expressions of pity or cold civility, occasionally arrived; but Anna, who had taught herself to do on very little, would have felt a satisfaction in returning the presents and the pity together, could she have done so without giving pain to her beloved husband.

Here,

Here, as at the place of their former residence, Mr. and Mrs. St. Orme received great attention from their neighbours and occasional acquaintance; their very superior manners, their extreme delicacy, the interesting situation of Anna, again about to become a mother, and the tenderness with which she nursed and watched over her drooping, shadowy charge, herself scarcely appearing an inhabitant of this nether world, excited the utmost degree of interest in the minds of many of the friendly inhabitants of the elegant little place which was now their home.

It was during this period of anxious care that Mrs. St. Orme gave birth to a second daughter, who, unlike her predecessor, was strong and healthy, smiled in its mother's arms, and created those undefinable emotions of pure joy which a mother's heart can alone appreciate. St. Orme too felt a new and strong tie to earth; hitherto he had contemplated the probable result of his illness with the calmness and philosophy

philosophy of a Christian who feels he has but few links that bind him to earth : Anna wound round his heart very fondly ; but a scarcely-acknowledged hope, the dream of youth and love, that as she had shared his every thought and pain, so would she share his grave, robbed even the grave of its gloom and coldness. He had a mother to whom he was devotedly attached ; but he knew that mother's passions and feelings were so perfectly under the dominion of what she considered religious duty—so thoroughly regulated by the strict rules she had laid down as the guide of her Christian life, that he felt assured she would immediately become reconciled to such a dispensation of an all-wise director ; thus he viewed death with calmness—almost with satisfaction : but the birth of his little girl was doomed to overset all his philosophy ; a new train of thought was awakened, a thousand new cares and desires rushed into his heart, and life acquired a tenfold value both for himself

himself and the mother of his lovely smiling babe, whose very helplessness called into action the strongest natural affections, and claimed his utmost aid. With those newly-awakened sentiments St. Orme beheld, with agony that shook his frame almost to dissolution, the enfeebled, fragile state of his beloved wife, and instantly summoned one of her younger sisters, to assist in the interesting but fatiguing charge of his little nursery.

Eliza Reynolds was young, lively, and pretty; fond of her sister, but still more so of her brother-in-law; she received his invitation therefore with delight, and entered on her new duties with a cheerfulness and alacrity, that rendered her a valuable auxiliary to the trembling, tender, but still self-subduing Anna.

## CHAPTER II.

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Alas! the ills of life  
Claim the full vigour of a mind prepared,  
Prepared for patient, long, laborious strife—  
Its guide experience, and truth its guard.

BEATTIE.

ELIZA Reynolds was too pretty, and too lively, to continue a very useful assistant to her sister: she loved the little family fondly, but she loved the gay world better; and an early and somewhat imprudent marriage removed her at the end of one year from the narrow sphere in which St. Orme and his wife were moving. Her place was soon filled by another sister, not quite so young, and without any pretension to beauty, but who was much better qualified to act the part of nurse, friend, and economist, than the rattling Eliza.

In

In her sister Miriam Mrs. St. Orme found one capable of rendering that assistance she now more than ever needed; her long and close attendance on her husband, whose promised recovery, though slow and uncertain, amply rewarded her toil and care, together with nursing the young Augusta, to which may be added privation, anxiety, and watching, had brought on a state of health sadly to be deplored; her spirits were yet unbroken, but they were frequently exhausted, and long dead faintings, or violent hysterical affections, were the consequence of unusual exertion, a sudden shock, or any thing that affected the nerves; yet she generally maintained her cheerfulness, subdued her agitation, and contrived to hide that she was in any way a sufferer.

When expostulated with by some of her matronly friends for drinking water only, and undergoing so much fatigue with little nourishment, she gaily assured them water was excellent nourishment for a nurse—that

that her general health was improved by the frugal way in which she lived, and pointed to her blooming girl as a proof of its propriety. Her advisers were not always convinced ; but while two well-filled decanters graced the little sideboard, and her abode appeared the seat of hospitality, they never suspected the sad truth that necessity, not choice, enforced Mrs. St. Orme's self-denying frugality ; nor did her husband for an instant suppose that when Miss Reynolds was dining out, which frequently happened, and Anna persuaded him to take his warm jelly or his chicken alone, it was that she might, by going without dinner herself, be the better enabled to procure for him some little delicacy or indulgence ; if he made any inquiry, she assured him she had fared very well, and extinguished his sometimes half-awakening suspicions, by declaring with a happy smile how much she felt her strength and health improve.

All this had passed unobserved with  
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the giddy Eliza; but the optic powers of Miriam Reynolds were keener—she knew men and things better; she knew a small income was ill calculated to meet sickness, and an increasing family; the promise of an addition therefore before the young Augusta could well walk or speak, gave her less pleasure than the fond parents enjoyed in such a prospect: yet before Augusta was eighteen months old, and while Mr. St. Orme was still a decided invalid, unable to do any thing, or even to allow much relaxation in regimen or attendance, another little girl made her appearance; and by the extreme beauty and delicacy of her fragile little form, laid claim to a more than common share of nursing and kindness.

St. Orme for a moment wished it had been a son, but Anna and her infants were inexpressibly dear, and the little stranger was another and still stronger tie to earth.—“What will become of them, Miriam, if I am taken?” exclaimed he, in accents of

of horror, as coming from his wife's room he met Miss Reynolds; "promise me you will never leave them—that you will share the weal and wo of my hapless Anna!"

Miss Reynolds promised all he asked, and soothed his half-distracted mind, by enforcing on him, what was indeed true, that though his health mended very slowly, still it *did*, beyond a doubt, improve, since some of the worst symptoms had totally disappeared. She then passed on to her sister's room, whom she had with some difficulty persuaded to allow her to perform the office of nurse, instead of procuring a hired one, at an expence that could be ill afforded.

Mrs. St. Orme had fallen asleep in her easy chair, but a tear still hung on her long fair eyelash.

"Ah!" sighed Miss Reynolds, as she pressed the delicate infant to her breast, "why came you here to increase your mother's silent tears, her hidden griefs, her

stolen sorrows, and overwhelming cares? surely, surely we had enough to bear before this? and yet the world accounts us happy and rich!"

"And so we are, my dear Miriam," returned Mrs. St. Orme, who had overheard her sister murmur the last sentence; "who can be happier, or who richer? we have enough to supply the wants of nature, and to keep up appearances—we owe no man any thing—my beloved husband is regaining his health—my children are healthy and lovely as angels—and I am almost strong; with such blessings, who shall say we are not rich and happy? Surely, of all creation, I have most cause for gratitude."

Miss Reynolds shook her head.—"This strange passion love must possess a wonderful power," replied she, "for it reconciles its votaries to strange things, and tints all the prospect with its own colouring."

A few weeks restored Mrs. St. Orme to her family,

family, but to the eye of affection she was not her former self; her nerves were shaken, and her system injured; change of air and scene were now prescribed for her as absolutely essential. Anna would fain have laughed it off—how could she leave her husband or nursery? But the effort was beyond her power, and the laugh ended in a deep hysterical convulsion.

St. Orme now insisted, and, painful as a separation could but prove to hearts so attached, Anna, with her youngest darling, took up her abode for a few weeks at her father's house, the home in which she first drew breath.

Meanwhile Augusta grew daily more interesting; she was her father's constant companion, who, amused by her tiny efforts to please and nurse him, and interested by the facility with which she learnt all he endeavoured to teach her, found a pride and a pleasure in his cherub-faced girl, that counterbalanced all the many difficulties with which he was surrounded.

Time passed on, and bore with it the charms of many a beauty, the tears of many a deserted one; it witnessed also the struggles of Mr. and Mrs. St. Orme against sickness and adversity—it witnessed their unfading attachment to each other, and their unshaken reliance on a Divine Providence. Circumstances had caused them to withdraw much from the world, and to think much of eternal things; perhaps some little fanaticism was mingled with their worship and views of futurity; but if so, at that time it was harmless, for the fruits of holiness were visible in their lives and conversation—that it afterwards cast too deep a shade over their minds, and sometimes acted as iron entering into the souls of those over whom its influence was exerted, cannot be denied, or even doubted.

Mrs. St. Orme had now been married twelve years, and was the mother of eight children, of which number, however, Augusta and two others only remained. Mr. St.

St. Orme had recovered a tolerable share of health, and had for several years acted as confidential agent to a merchant of the highest grade; but this gentleman being about to withdraw from business altogether, St. Orme was again at broad sea. It now became his wish, and the earnest desire of his wife, that he should embark on the mercantile ocean on his own account; some little assistance was promised by a favourite brother, good connexions were secured, and every thing promised success.

A long period of ill health and adversity had sunk the once joyous spirits of St. Orme even more than those of his wife; he still retained his fine person and happy manners, but the energies of his mind were weakened; he was now almost afraid to attempt a struggle with the waves of difficulty that would beat against him in his new attempt, looked every difficulty in the face, and shuddered at the grim aspect it bore.

Not so the still-spirited, enduring Anna ; her twelve years of married life had been years of severe bodily suffering and mental exertion ; but she had not yet reached that point of wo when the mind, sinking beneath its load, makes a few faint struggles and is seen no more ; hitherto her mental powers had gathered strength by usage ; in the last year she had passed through a heavy fit of sickness, and been robbed by death of her sister Miriam : these, and subsequent misfortunes, had greatly impaired her beauty, and rendered her, in some degree, irritable ; her light-brown locks were stripped by fever, and prematurely blanched by care ; her complexion no longer boasted the rose and the lily—the rose was faded, and the lily tarnished : her person, attenuated by disease, no longer presented a full round form ; but her frame was still active, her step firm and agile, and the unbent energy of her mind still illumined her clear blue eye—and that eye rested as fondly on the husband of her choice,

choice, as it had done in the first happy days of their marriage; towards him she was as ever the kind, consoling companion, the helpmeet, whose stronger mind sometimes influenced his wavering decision, but never for a moment presumed to claim a superiority to itself.

Augusta, now eleven years old, was a lively, spirited, inquiring girl, awake to all that passed around her, the companion of her parents, accustomed to hear and enter into all their discussions, the second mother of her brothers, and the superintending nurse of her infant sister. Circumstances had called Augusta's mental powers into active exertion, at a period of life when girls in general know not that they possess any. She had watched over and catched the expiring breath of several infant brothers, attended her mother in various illnesses, planned ways and means for putting the best face on every thing around them, and contrived to dress the little Miriam from clothes she was herself grown

out of, with peculiar taste and neatness. Too useful to be spared from home, Augusta had picked up a scrambling sort of education, gleaned from the governess of a superior kind of day-school (who at nine years of age Augusta could have instructed in many things), from her father, who read the best poets and historians aloud of an evening, while his wife and daughter pursued their needlework, from desultory reading, from the newspapers, and from observation.

The last-named tutor was indeed Augusta's best friend; nothing passed unnoticed, scarcely a conversation, however trifling, that did not give her some new idea, open some new field of thought or inquiry, or elucidate a point on which she had before been pondering, and this once done, the subject was her own for ever; nothing was too minute—nothing too grand for her eager mind—her quick comprehension. The wide book of nature was open before her, and she studied its various pages with delighted

delighted avidity. The brilliant expanse of "Heaven's high arch" was to Augusta an inexhaustible theme of wonder and delight; stationed at an upper window, she would, evening after evening, watch the progress of the "silver moon" through her trackless path, seek for her favourite bright stars, and form systems of astronomy that further observation was doomed to destroy; but nothing dismayed at discovering her frequent mistakes, the persevering little girl went on until every principal constellation was familiar to her, though she did not even know that her brilliant favourites were formed into constellations, nor had the word, at least an explanation of it, ever met her ear.

Notwithstanding every disadvantage, Augusta St. Orme was a little gentlewoman, though untutored by the dancing-master, or the drill sergeant; her tall slight figure was graceful, easy, and dignified; though unaccustomed to society, yet having never mingled with inferior persons,

her address and manners were elegant, animated, and free from every shade of embarrassment. Simply attired in a plain lawn frock, without any ornaments, save her glowing complexion and shining light hair, falling in natural curls on her fair neck and shoulders, Augusta wore an air of superiority, that claimed, and obtained, the first place among the youthful circle of better-dressed lasses who attended the same school, and composed the acquaintance of the blooming girl.

Mr. St. Orme was justly proud of his children; as with swimming eyes he followed the cheerful, active footsteps of his daughter, while, with consideration far beyond her age, she arranged the ornaments of their little parlour, instructed her impetuous violent brother in his lessons, and his duty, or guided the tottering steps of the infant Miriam, he would silently lift his heart to Heaven, proffer a humble supplication for the welfare of his darlings, and acknowledge that, with such a stimulus,

thus, exertion or care should be no longer remembered as painful—all the father and the Christian would swell at his heart, restring his nerves, and arm his expiring energies with renewed vigour.

It was late on a Saturday evening, when the wind whistled cold and bleak from without, that Mrs. St. Orme, having performed all her matronly duties towards her two younger cherubs, and left them sweetly sleeping in their humble little beds, returned to the parlour, where Augusta, seated on a low stool, was reading a volume of the Spectator by firelight—“I am glad you are come, mamma,” exclaimed she; “for now I can read by your candle, and the fire is gone very low.”

Mrs. St. Orme trimmed her fire, as she inquired—“Have you drawn up Miriam’s frock and cap?—have you buttoned her stays and skirt together?”

“Yes, mamma.”

“Have you placed all Edward’s clothes in order, that nothing may hinder your being

being ready for church in proper time to-morrow?"

"Oh yes, dear mamma, every thing is done for the children, for papa, for you, and myself, and we shall be ready early enough to please any one: we may be there before the doors open, if you wish it.—But what detains papa, I wonder; he is not often so late as this."

"Not often indeed," sighed the anxious mother; "and of a Saturday night too—a bad preparation this for the Sabbath! Dear, dear, how violently the wind and rain drive against the windows! Inquire, Augusta, if supper is quite ready; and pray put that book away; place a dry pair of slippers for your father, and have every thing in order until he comes in."

"Here comes papa; that is his knock, I know," cried the delighted girl, as the door opened, and St. Orme appeared within it.

"Where, my dear, have you been until this late hour?—what could possibly keep you

you out on such a night?" fondly but anxiously inquired his wife.

"Give me some supper, my dear Anna, and after that you shall know all I have seen and done," replied he, as changing his coat and shoes he prepared to partake the social meal.—"How long, my dear, have we been in this cottage?" asked St. Orme, casting his eyes around the neat little room in which they were sitting.

"Seven years," replied his wife—"seven years, in which your life and talents have been devoted to the benefit of one who will never acknowledge either; and my health has materially suffered from fatigue and confinement. Well, it could not be helped; we must, however, strive to do better now—the children claim every exertion at our hands we can possibly make; and though we shall certainly encounter some difficulties in the outset, future success and their benefit will amply compensate for them all."

"Heaven grant, my dear Anna, your sanguine

sanguine predictions may prove correct! True, we have lived here on a very narrow income; but hitherto, my love, we have had sufficient for our absolute wants, and have avoided great trouble and difficulty, which now we must prepare to meet with fortitude."

"Have you then, dear papa, really determined to go into business?" eagerly demanded Augusta.

"I have indeed, my child," returned her father, affectionately smiling on mother and child, "and have taken a large house, and made purchases to a considerable amount — an amount that almost frightens me to think of. We have often talked of difficulties and economy, but I fancy it is now that we shall feel the one, and must practise the other."

"Never fear, my dear," returned Mrs. St. Orme, with animation: "I see no reason why you may not manage your own affairs as well, and with as much judgment, as you did those of your rich employer;

ployer ; your connexions are good, and I foresee many pleasant years in store for us all ; therefore don't croak, but cheerfully and unreservedly give your ways into the guidance of him who is equally able and willing to direct your steps aright, and who has promised that they that depend on him shall not want any good thing."

St. Orme raised his fine dark eyes to heaven as he replied—" I acknowledge with gratitude that hitherto I have not wanted any good thing, and am willing to believe I never shall ; at all events, you will henceforward be convinced that I have done all that could be done for my family :—but it is you, Augusta, who will reap the benefit of it ; my feeble health, and your mother's impaired constitution, will hardly, I think, weather the storm we must brave before our vessels ride at ease."

" Then," replied Augusta, her eyes swimming in tears, " do pray, papa, resign the idea altogether ; for though I should be

be delighted to remove from this birdcage of a place, and to see you and mamma moving in your proper sphere, yet I should feel miserable under the reflection that you were braving storms for *me* alone; I am but one, and want but one thing, and if I cannot have that, I will even strive to supply the deficiency by industry, and do without it."

"Not very grateful to your papa, I think, Miss," sharply returned her mother, "after all he has done for you; I am ashamed of you, always harping on the same string; if we could conveniently afford to give you a better education, you should have had it without teasing; but I will not have your kind papa wearied with your importunities, I assure you—so let me hear no more about it."

Augusta, with tears, implored her parents not to think her ungrateful; she would do all she could to oblige, and if she did wish for a little more instruction, it was only that she may instruct Miriam, or, in  
case

case of any terrible thing happening, be enabled to provide for herself.

“ Ah; well,” said St. Orme, who talked very much about sensible and accomplished women, at the same time that he would have grudged labour or expence to form one, “ ah, well, strive to teach yourself—there are a great many French books in the house, and you may study them ; you may likewise learn to play your mother’s guitar ; people who have any taste require but little instruction—some of our greatest geniuses never received any ; when you are got some way forward, a little teaching may be of service to you, but certainly not at present.”

“ To be sure not,” returned Mrs. St. Orme, (who in her conscience knew much better.) “ Augusta has had a great deal of schooling, and shall have more and better ; but she is very young yet, and must have a little patience, until I can spare her with greater convenience, and we can afford it better. Ever since Maria Gouldney

ney went to that grand school, she has been wild to do the same; but Augusta should recollect that Mr. Gouldney is a rich man, and his family small; however, she shall be as well educated as any of them by-and-by."

"Reach the Bible, Augusta," said her father, with a deep sigh, "and let us close the day by praying for a blessing on our new undertaking."

Augusta did as she was desired; the little household was summoned; and St. Orme thought, that if his daughter could not read French, very few could equal her in propriety or solemnity, while reading the contents of that book which for years had been her daily study.

## CHAPTER III.

Our true happiness does not so much depend on the nature and extent of our possessions, as our being satisfied with what we possess, and our obtaining that self-command which will enable us to limit our wishes to what may be attainable.

SIR ROBERT BERNARD.

FOR several years the St. Ormes were doomed to prove, that a large house, extensive acquaintance, servants, and all the appearance of superior life, brought with them little, save difficulty and perplexity, to a man struggling to increase a small capital, and preserve the credit of possessing fourfold the wealth he had ever been able to realize. Every year, however, enabled Mr. St. Orme to extend his speculations, and more firmly establish his credit on the broad basis of commercial integrity: his payments were always regular; his purchases

chases made with due caution; his sales conducted with justice and liberality; and his word so honourably kept, that on 'Change, or elsewhere, it was proverbial that St. Orme's word was as good as his bond. By this correct line of procedure, the highest degree of respectability was attached to the name of his house; and though neither he nor his family entered into the gaieties of the gay city in which they lived, did not give large dinner-parties, or enter much into general society, they were very highly respected and esteemed as a family of consequence, rapidly advancing to wealth and distinction.

Mr. and Mrs. St. Orme were both members of a religious community, whose principles forbid any participation in gaieties, amusement, or company, excepting among themselves; hence their absenting from all public places, and refraining from mingling with the excellent society their acknowledged grade offered, passed with very little observation, being naturally placed to

to the score of religious scruple; and as their intimates were very few, the confined state of their circumstances, or the rigid economy practised by them, was never suspected by the world.

In the mean while, the young Augusta had vainly sighed for a more liberal education, had obtained the terms of all the schools within twenty miles round, and could tell to a fraction the amount of the half-yearly bills of a dozen little objects of her envy, who were reaping the advantage of two years waste of time in a "genteel boarding-school for young ladies :" for a longer period than two years, Augusta had never ventured to implore; this high indulgence had generally been promised her, and a time frequently proposed for the commencement of these important studies; but, alas! those periods constantly brought with them disappointment; and Augusta again wept the demolition of her air-built castles.—"Why, dear mamma," asked the anxious girl one day, "is it that I cannot go

go to school this summer? You have no infant now, and your health is so much better, that I do think you may spare me, if it be but for *one year*; I promise most faithfully to make good use of my time; and then you know, dear mamma, I can educate Miriam myself, and so save all you spend on me."

" You know, Augusta, that I am as anxious as yourself that your education should receive some sort of finish," returned the mother; " but we cannot manage it this half-year; your father has a great deal of money to make up, and I really am astonished that a girl of your age, knowing as you do how much it is your papa's desire to provide every thing handsome for you, can wish to bring still heavier expences on him; it is certainly very thoughtless, to say no worse."

" Nay, mamma, do not be angry," returned the tearful Augusta; " I am now thirteen, and unless I go this year, papa I know will think me too old, and so indeed

deed I shall be ; beside, you know, Miriam will soon want instruction, and I should much like to educate her : papa finds money for every thing else, and surely *one year* would not hurt him for poor me : I never cost a great deal yet."

This brought an angry expostulation from the sickly, irritable parent, on the ingratitude and torment of children. Augusta was reproached with want of proper affection, thoughtlessness, and extravagance, and bid to remember, how much her father had already done for her more than she deserved, to be grateful and industrious.

Augusta withdrew in tears, deplored that mamma had grown so cross and unreasonable ; and as she again made up the little Miriam's nicely-washed muslin bonnet, and regarded her own plain pink frock, and black shoes, wondered how she, who had scarcely ever a new thing, could be extravagant ! or how she, who was a slave to father, mother, brother, and sister,

often sitting up whole nights, when sickness or affliction visited any of them, could be charged with want of affection.—“Alas!” sighed the high-spirited girl, “little does mamma think how severely I feel it, or how much I wish to provide for myself: if I did but know French and music, I would teach myself all the rest, and either get a school or a situation as governess, and be no longer a burden on any one: however, I will say no more about school.”

Thus early taught to commune with herself, and forced to find a remedy within for the evils without, and ever eager after knowledge, Augusta gained a strength of mind, and decision of character, that schools or school discipline could not have given her. From this time she never agitated the subject again, but applied closely to the few books within her reach: of these the Spectator, a mutilated copy of the Guardian, Young’s Night Thoughts, Jane’s Beauties of the Poets, two unconnected

nected volumes of Clarissa Harlowe, and some odd volumes of the best poets, with Drelincourt on Death, and Burnett's Theory of the Earth, were the principal; not perhaps the most judicious selection for an inquiring, ardent mind, certainly differing very widely from the rich profusion poured into the lap of young females of the present day; but Augusta was not of the present day, nor was she ever likely to be ruined by profusion or indulgence: books or instruction were very difficult to be obtained, and it was probably to this cause mainly to be attributed, that both became so valuable in the estimation of Augusta: be that as it may, it is certain that her little library was read and re-read with increasing delight, until every sentence became familiar, and Addison and Johnson her dear and valued friends; even the visionary, dreamy Drelincourt possessed power to charm—and Burnett was never studied by a more indefatigable or comprehending pupil. With

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Clarissa

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Clarissa she wept or rejoiced—longed for the other volumes, and often wondered if in the world there were many Clarissas, or if another Lovelace could be found, so full of faults, yet so capable of pleasing. But Augusta's favourite author was Young; with him she was enthusiastic, melancholy, or prayerful: the Night Thoughts were among her mother's favourite works; this sanctified them to Augusta; and the little Miriam was oftener lulled to rest by the murmuring of the poet's flowing verse, than by nursery lullabies.

It was about this time, that one winter evening, while Augusta and her mother were industriously plying their needles, St. Orme took from his pocket a book Augusta had not before seen: her eyes sparkled with pleasure as she exclaimed—  
“ What new book is that, papa ?”

“ I will read it to you while you work; perhaps you will learn something from it,” returned the father. St. Orme possessed a fine voice, and read well; the many exquisite

quisite touches in Mackenzie's "Man of Feeling" therefore lost nothing in the little circle that were now enthralled by its simple magic.

Augusta had never heard of a novel, and considering every word from her father's mouth as gospel, it was with the utmost simplicity she inquired—"Is the whole of that book true, papa?"

"True enough, my child."

"And when did it happen, papa?"

"That our author does not tell us; but the work is a new one."

St. Orme did not mean to deceive his daughter, but he would have felt ashamed to own, even to himself, that a man of his rigidly religious profession had read and felt interested in a *novel*, and not for worlds would he have allowed Augusta to understand the nature of such a work, and think her father countenanced it. Hence a species of delicate deception was practised by both parents, at the moment that the pure mind of either would have

started with horror at the bare conception of imposing on their child. But the effects of her new acquisition to Augusta was, the opening a new page of nature's volume, presented in vivid colours to her fresh and ductile mind, on which the characters presented by her circumscribed library were painted with a never-dying pencil; and when shortly after, a gentleman hearing the lively girl speak rapturously of her late reading, placed "Colummela" in her hands, though "Novel" was written on the titlepage, it was not until returning it, with free animadversions on the eccentricities of the hero, Augusta formed any idea that it was more than the simple narrative of an extraordinary young man. It was with the utmost astonishment she then heard that her favourites were beings of imagination, though the characters were drawn near to nature; that such works were to be found in great abundance, and often presented faithful copies of men and manners.

"But

“ But are they not all falsehoods, and therefore improper to be read ?” asked Augusta, whose correct mind rejected even that which had given her so much delight, when the taint of falsehood was affixed to it. Her friend, who was a sensible, intelligent man, attempted to explain, and took some pains to draw the different shades of truth and falsehood. But Augusta was no casuist, and could not be convinced that truth and falsehood were not distinct things. Hence Clarissa, Harleym, and Colummela, were all banished : even her favourite Spectator lost some part of its charm.—“ Who can tell,” thought she—“ this too may be filled with fancied characters : the Criticism on Milton I do not clearly understand, but I will ask papa to lend me Milton, and read it attentively.” Her father’s reply, “ True enough, my child,” often crossed Augusta’s memory, and left behind it a sort of unpleasant feeling that she hastened to get rid of ; yet the question—“ Why did not

papa tell me all Mr. Stuart did?" often forced itself on her, and something like mortification was experienced at supposing he thought her too young, or too insignificant, for such an explanation. She likewise recollects that neither papa nor mamma appeared at all interested in what she was doing while reading her borrowed treasure, though she told them many of her hero's "hairbreadth 'scapes."—"And yet they knew it was falsehood!—all, every bit of it falsehood. Alas! do they not care at all for me then?—am I only valuable as I am useful as a domestic? If so, no wonder all instruction proper for my rank in life was refused me! Well, Miriam, I will act more kindly by you."

Parents should be extremely careful how they act towards their children, so as to prevent every feeling of neglect or mortification—feelings that canker and blight the opening blossoms of the youthful mind. Those reflections formed a new epoch in the life of Augusta, and tinted with

with its own doubtful colouring many of her after years.

With some difficulty Augusta obtained permission to read her father's copy of "Paradise Lost :" she had when very young heard her father read it during their quiet evenings at the cottage; and Mrs. St. Orme thought that sufficient : she began to discover that Augusta spent too much of her time in reading and writing, which would be injurious both to her health and beauty, without producing any equivalent advantage.

"Not that, surely, mamma," urged her imploring daughter ; "the improvement of my mind will amply compensate for the little time I give to literary pursuits."

"Literary pursuits indeed!—literary nonsense ! Your mind is improved enough, Heaven knows ! you can argue and plead like a counsellor : you know too much already."

"Very little is too much then, mamma ;

for it is very little I know, compared with other girls of my age."

"What, because you have not been at a boarding-school, I suppose?" angrily returned the mother; "I should like to know who of your age knows more, or who is better off? but there is no pleasing young people now-a-days; their heads are all full of nonsense. Have you finished Edward's shirt? that is the thing of most consequence for you to be thinking of."

"It was only cut out yesterday, mamma," replied Augusta, in a subdued voice; "but you shall have it in time, depend on it."

"He goes to school remember next week, and will want all his shirts."

"Ah!" thought Augusta, as she drew out her work, "school and kindness for him, but little of either for me. Well, his being unhappy will not increase my peace—God bless him!"

She hastily brushed the tears from her eyes, and shaking back her clustering ringlets,

lets, replaced the books, and sat cheerfully down to her work.

But scenes of this kind (and they occurred frequently), had a very injurious tendency on a young mind eager for knowledge, endowed with strong powers, and full of observation. Augusta was by nature candid and unsuspecting; generosity and liberality were the prominent features of her disposition; and an eager desire to do good to every one, to be useful to all within her reach, was conspicuous in every action and word: but she was innately proud and dignified, and her feelings, too acutely sensible for her own happiness, required gentle management and mild reasoning, the affectionate hand of watchful experience to prune their exuberance, and guide them into a right channel; friendly expostulation and rational direction would have subdued that haughty spirit: ever open to conviction, and painfully alive to her own defects, Augusta would have worshipped the being who would have

kindly corrected her errors, and pointed out the path that led to perfection, for to this high point all her views were directed : but, alas ! no such hand was then held out, and against querulous complaints, irritable exclamations, ebullitions of temper, and groundless charges of ingratitude, which her affectionate heart was incapable of, her proud soul revolted, and her candid nature shrunk. The unbidden tear would rush to her eye, but be hastily brushed away, or hidden among the thick light brown curls that shaded her brow ; not a word of defence or remonstrance was uttered : implicit obedience had been among her earliest lessons ; but, as she gulped it down, as her tall figure was drawn up and swelled almost to bursting, her glowing cheek mantled with a deeper dye, and her eye flashed disdain.

A man better acquainted with the youthful mind, of greater discrimination, more tact, and less occupied than St. Orme, instead of calling her expression of wounded

wounded feelings “insolence,” uttering denunciations against “pride,” or giving way to anger, would have soothed that high spirit, humbled it by kindness, and have been particularly careful in avoiding every thing that could call those rebellious feelings into action.

But the fact was, that neither St. Orme nor his wife were calculated to form or guide the young mind. A long struggle with adversity had tried the temper of both. St. Orme was completely spoilt by his fond and irritable wife: he had for many years been the object of her adoration; she had nursed him through a long sickness, supported him in adversity, bolstered him up against difficulties, persuaded him and herself that he was faultless, been a slave to his whims and caprices, and was now a victim to his fits of melancholy and her own acute fears. For him her children had been neglected, and to him they had been taught to bow as to a being of another creation—a being incapable

able of mistake or error; and Anna had by this mistaken fondness transformed the kind friend and sensible companion into something of a despotic lord and overbearing companion.

In this injudicious labour of love, Anna had lost her health, the equanimity of her spirits, her temper, and her nerves; the latter, from long sickness and repeated frights, were so dreadfully shaken, that she now lived in a state of nervous trepidation that required the utmost care, and forbid the slightest contradiction; her eminent self-denial too was gone, and she was become testy, subject to starts of anger, capricious, and almost selfish. Yet still she was affectionate, kind-hearted, and cheerful; her blue eye was still bright, and it would sparkle on her husband and children with all the warmth and glow of youthful love—her bosom was still their pillow in sickness or sorrow, and the lip that replied with asperity would kiss away the tears her asperity caused. If sickness clouded

clouded the brow of any part of her family, fretfulness, nervousness, all disappeared—she was the kind, active, experienced nurse, insensible to fatigue, and awake to every thing but self. Time and its concomitants had rendered her changeable, but nothing could extinguish those kindly feelings planted in her soul by the hand of God himself.

In the midst of this contradiction was Augusta reared, witness to the many noble actions her father performed, his unbounded philanthropy, his high estimation of talent, his honourable integrity, his filial piety, and his high religious profession—a witness too of his occasional severity, his sternness, and his prejudices. The participator of her mother's cares, and the sharer of her anxieties, venerating, almost adoring both her parents, she could not be blind to the discrepancies on which she dared not make a remark, but which impressed themselves on her mind, and leading her to make false estimates, served only

only to increase the faults of a character whose strong lines just then required the hand of experience and clear judgment to train it to perfection.

Augusta finished her brother's shirts and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in good time. The shirts pleased her mother, but the poem did not satisfy the daughter—the *subject* was truth, but the *manner of treating it* was falsehood, at least it was imagination, and so were novels; Augusta's innate honesty could not reconcile this blending of truth and fiction; yet her favourite Addison spoke highly of the poem, so did her father, and they were Augusta's standards of truth and wisdom.

A few days after this, as Augusta sat deeply interested in a volume of Hume's *History of England*, that her father had left on the table, her grandfather, who was a plain sober Quaker, and one of Augusta's best friends, entered the room unperceived.—“What art thee reading there, child?” asked the old gentleman.

Augusta

Augusta starting, cried out—"Oh dear, grandpapa, is it you? how glad I am to see you!"

"I dare believe thou art, my child; but what art thee reading?"

"The reign of Henry the Eighth, grandpa'. I should like to read all Hume's History, if papa will allow me; history is *so very* interesting; and then you know it is all true."

"Thee art wrong, child," gravely returned the Quaker; "there is more of lies than truth in history, and the truth it does tell had better not be known—it is a record of vice and bloodshed. This Hume was an infidel impudent liar; let me warn thee, therefore, never look into his trash again. I wonder Augustus left it in thy way."

So saying the old man put the interdicted book in its place, and left his granddaughter wondering if there were no printed books beside the Bible which contained truth, or in what part of the world the goddess dwelt.

CHAP-

## CHAPTER IV.

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Ah ! world unknown, how charming is thy view !  
Thy pleasures many, and each pleasure new :  
Ah ! world experienced, what of thee is told ?  
How few thy pleasures, and those few how old !

C R A B B E .

THE difficulty with which an object is obtained frequently enhances its value, and renders possession more dear. So it was with Augusta St. Orme, who amidst restrictions, contradictions, rebuffs, fondling, scolding, and flattery, attained her sixteenth birthday, and without a regular education, with very little assistance, and but few resources, possessed more information on general subjects, a better knowledge of history (*malgré* grandpapa's interdict), sounder principles, and a firmer mind, than any modern pupil of a modern school,

school, or any highly-accomplished young lady fresh from the hands of a score of "eminent masters," superintended by a lady of fashion and elegance, could have boasted, even though a winter in Paris had been given as a last polish.

Nor was Augusta deficient in personal appearance: she was tall, and finely formed, and had needed no other drill sergeant than her mother, who, elegant herself, carefully corrected every contrary tendency in her daughters; a native grace and innate sense of dignity and propriety, supplied in a great measure the place of a dancing-master, from whom Augusta received but three months' instruction; a redundancy of brilliant light brown hair, falling in natural curl around her fair neck and forehead, added to the beauty of a countenance glowing with health, animation, and cheerfulness; naturally gay, light, and active, every action and movement possessed an air and grace that the most

most laborious or polished teacher frequently fails in giving.

Augusta was by nature formed for society, and the constant habit of receiving her mother's visitors had given her a love for it: perfectly easy, well-bred, and good-natured, Augusta was always at home; whether in the drawing-room of a peer, or the kitchen of a cottager, she was still in her place, graceful, and at ease. It was impossible for parents to see such a girl without pleasure; both Mr. and Mrs. St. Orme were justly proud of their children; Augusta they considered, with fond parental pride, as the queen of their little circle. Among the many whom she had envied when sent to this "seminary," or that "establishment," she now shone pre-eminent in personal grace as in information; and frequently Mrs. St. Orme could not help asking her lively daughter, in what she found those highly-educated young people superior to herself.

The French revolution was just now at its

its height, affording conversation and interest for all Europe, and was in England the subject on which men, women, and children, talked, argued, and disputed : the press teemed with pamphlets and inflammatory works ; and liberty, rights of man, rights of women, reason, priestcraft, and infidelity, were bandied about from lip to lip, and hand to hand, in all directions ; they were the shuttlecocks played by all ages and distinctions, flitting before the weaksighted, and dazzling even the clearer optics of their neighbours. No family, however retired its habits—no member of the community, however serious and steady his principles, but were interested in the strong political discussions that then shook all Europe, and made monarchs tremble.

To a girl of Augusta's inquiring powerful mind, such a period was fraught with intense interest ; she was just entering on the confines of a world unknown—just beginning to form her friends and make  
her

her visits without mamma—hearing and seeing things she had never before fancied, and on the eager stretch for information of every sort.

Full of fears for the fate of the unfortunate Louis and his family, Augusta, accompanied by her little sister Miriam, one evening walked to the house of a young friend, between whose parents and her own there had always been habits of intimacy; here she met an elderly French gentleman, who called himself the “abbé Duprée.” He was a respectable old man, with all the garrulity of his country, and poured into Augusta’s ready ears such an account of sufferings endured, of hardships encountered, of cruelties witnessed, of cheerful poverty, and patriotic self-devotion, that

“ She lov’d *him* for the sufferings he had pass’d,  
And *he* lov’d her that she did pity them.”

The *émigré*’s very broken English gave interest to his “pity-moving tale;” and when

when Augusta, with tearful eyes, asked, in very bad French, some knowledge of which she had lately picked up from an *émigrée* countess that she had met with, maintaining herself by making bell-ropes, how he meant to support himself in this country, the *vieillard* replied—"By teaching French à *les dames Angloises*—that his terms would be very low—that he had *l'honneur* to teach mademoiselle Miles."

Augusta's heart leaped with joy.—"Now," thought she, "I shall do this fine old Frenchman a service, and improve myself at the same time; papa I know will let me take lessons from him, and I shall soon be able to converse with *madame la comtesse*, instead of making signs, as I now do."

As Augusta thought, she spoke; caution at that time formed no part of her character.—"How delightful, my dear Mary," exclaimed she, turning to her demure little friend Miss Miles, "that you should meet with such a master! I certainly

tainly will prevail on papa to allow me to learn immediately. Every body should know French now, when one hears so much of France—don't you think so?"

"I do indeed," replied Miss Miles, "or I should not have put my parents to such an expence."

"We pay eighteenpence a lesson," interrupted Mrs. Miles; "but if you, Miss St. Orme, will take lessons with Mary, I dare say he will give the two hours for two shillings."

Augusta's generous heart rejected such a proposal, as she respectfully inquired of the abbé if he had been successful in obtaining pupils.

"He had *à présent* only mademoiselle; but a *jeune milord Anglois* had promised to become his *élève*."

"That," cried Miss Miles, with something more than her usual vivacity, "is your scientific friend Waite, Augusta; only fancy *his* learning a modern language!"

"If

"If Oldham Waite becomes the pupil of monsieur," returned Augusta proudly, "he will have cause for pleasure; Oldham is as good as he is liberal and sensible, and will prove himself a friend, as well as an intelligent pupil."

"Does Oldham know how great a favourite he is with you, my dear?" archly asked Mrs. Miles.

"I suppose so," returned Augusta coolly, who had nothing to blush about, but did not like the expression of her friend's countenance; "but," continued she, "I will speak to the Heathfields; Anna Heathfield has learnt a long while at school, but she knows little about the matter I fancy: if they will patronize him, much will be done."

The Frenchman thanked his animated young friend with all the politeness and well-bred flattery of his nation; and Augusta took leave, and returned home, delighted with her visit and its consequences.

After hearing the young Miriam repeat

her prayers, singing with her the Evening Hymn, and carefully folding and placing away the little girl's clothes, Augusta bid her good night with a mother's fondness, and turned her footsteps towards the nursery, where a sickly younger brother claimed her attention. An orphan cousin had likewise lately been added to the family, and shared a parent's and a sister's care with the others; he was now vainly endeavouring to still the cries of the little Gordon, who fretfully screamed in the arms of an old servant, who doated on and spoiled him.—“Hush! hush, my boy! come here, and tell me all your troubles,” cried Augusta, taking her brother from his nurse's arms.

“I'll tell ye, Miss, what 'tis vexed the little dear,” said old Susy; “his brother Edward was here, and he would eat some of the little feller's egg that I biled for his supper, and that teased un, and enuff too, a pretty cretur.”

“He will be a very naughty little creature

ture if he screams for such trifles as that. Indeed, Susy, you quite spoil him; and beside, you know it will make him selfish," replied Augusta, who had soothed the young rebel into quietness.—"Had you, Robert," continued she, addressing her cousin—"had you an egg for your supper?"

"No, sister," replied the boy, for she was sister to all.

"Go down then, and desire Mary to boil you one, and bring it up, that little Gordon may see how a good boy will eat his supper."

"Laws, Miss, he don't know no better; there's little missy will cry too very often when she is here; law, how should they know better, little creturs!" interposed nurse.

"They are not too young to begin, Susy," returned her young mistress; "Gordon is more than two years old, and his being sickly can be no excuse for his crying; on the contrary, only makes it

the more necessary he should be kept happy and cheerful; spoiled children are never either. Your old favourite Edward even, you see is in disgrace with you on his account, the first day too of his return from school."

"Oh, bless ye, no, Miss, I beant angry with my Edward, poor lamb! only there  
—"

The return of Robert, with his egg, put an end to Susy's harangue, for her precious pet began to roar for it. Robert, who was mildness and kindness itself, would have freely given it him, but Augusta would not permit; she however carried her point, quieted Gordon, and made him meekly ask his cousin for some, and observe how good-naturedly he gave it, without crying. Edward was then called, that Gordon might ask to be forgiven. Poor Edward was a sad tyrant, but generous and kind-hearted to a fault; he hugged the little fellow with all the tenderness of a bear, and declared he would give

give him every thing he had if he wanted it.

Peace being thus restored, Augusta dismissed the elder boys to their beds, and herself placing the little one in his cot, desired that no one would speak, and then descended to the parlour, to see that supper was laid aright, and await the return of her father and mother from their garden.

It was not long before the well-known knock and ring announced their arrival. Augusta advanced to meet them, and whilst taking off her mother's bonnet and shawl, answered all the maternal inquiries concerning Miriam and the boys that were put to her, admired the fruit her father had brought home, and then ringing the bell, ordered supper and candles.

"Where have you been this evening, my dear?" asked St. Orme of his daughter.

"Only as far as the Miles's, papa," returned she; "but I met there one of the most interesting characters I ever saw."

St. Orme smiled—Augusta so often met with the most interesting character.

"Nay, papa, don't smile; he is, I assure you, particularly interesting."

"I dare say; and a *he* too is it?"

"Yes, a *he* too: a fine, grey-headed old man, a real French abbé, who has lived very much at the court of Louis."

"A very bad place to live at."

"Yes, now it would be."

"There is no such place *now*; but it was a very bad place to live at."

"Why so, papa?"

"Because it was a dissipated, luxurious, sensual court."

"Oh, but my poor, dear old friend was a *clergyman*, a man of great learning and piety, who, on account of his attachment to his church and his king, has been made to suffer dreadfully by those cruel revolutionists."

"I doubt not his suffering a great deal; his luxuries, and his means of self-indulgence,

gence, are gone; but his learning and piety, especially the latter, I do doubt."

"But, papa, why judge so prematurely? you have never seen him."

"Nor desire to. Perhaps he was not even an abbé at home; but they are all alike."

"Poor things," said Mrs. St. Orme, "they are much to be pitied. But they swarm like locusts in this place; I cannot think how they contrive to live."

"Why, my new acquaintance, mamma, intends to live by teaching French, and Mary Miles has engaged to be his first pupil; Oldham Waite too I understand has been talking to him on the subject."

"Does he speak English then?" asked St. Orme.

"A very little, papa; but—"

"But indeed!" interrupted her mother indignantly. "So that stupid girl, Mary, without an idea in her head, is to be taught French, and for what? she will never require it for conversation or soci-

ety, for little of either will do for her I fancy."

" You seem angry, my love," said St. Orme; " for mercy's sake let people follow their own fancies. Mary is an only child, and Miles fancies her a prodigy."

" So she is—of stupidity."

" Well, stupid or not," said Augusta, " she is to learn French from monsieur; his charge is only eighteenpence a lesson; and, papa, I want to coax you to let me learn to."

" Oh, learn with all my heart, that or any thing else you choose."

" Thank you, dear sir; but that is not the permission I require: the abbé must be allowed to come here, and you must pay him."

" I don't like the French, nor their gibberish—I don't understand it."

" When I know, I'll teach you, if you choose."

" But I do not choose; I have done very

very well without it hitherto, and my children may do the same."

"Nay, dear papa, that is a little illiberal; you are a Latin scholar, the boys will be so likewise—I do not ask for Latin, only a little French from the poor abbé."

"It is all nonsense, you will do just as well without it; my sisters never learned it, and I see no good it can be to you."

Augusta knew "my mother," or "my sisters," when introduced, generally proved conclusive, and was for the present withdrawing her petition, when Mrs. St. Orme hastily said—"I cannot think, my dear Augusta, why you are always wishing for some new expence in your education; French can never be of any use to you, and for general information, or genteel manners, very few girls are your equal; do pray, therefore, rest content as you are. If French were ever likely to be useful to you, one would overcome every objection; but there is scarcely a possibility of that."

"There is no knowing, mamma," re-

plied Augusta with a sigh; “every thing in this life is so uncertain, that I may be very glad to make use of the little information or talent I possess; a thousand things may occur to drive me on my own resources, beyond human control.”

“ You are very right, my child; it is but too true, and there is little fear of knowing too much. Would this abbé then come home to you, or would he expect you to wait on him for his eighteen-pence?”

“ Certainly, papa, he will come to me; I should not think of going to any one. Mrs. Miles proposed that Mary and I should take lessons together, and thought perhaps he would give them cheaper; but, poor man, his terms are low enough.”

“ Oh, nonsense! if you choose to take a few lessons you may, but give the man what he requires, and let him come home; we do not wish to deny you any thing you desire that we can afford.”

“ No indeed,” added his complacent wife,

wife, "we wish to give our children every advantage in our power; so, my child, you may see this abbé, and fix your own time. I shall be much disappointed if you do not make greater progress than Mary Miles, who, though one of the best girls in the world, is certainly not one of the most brilliant."

Augusta gratefully and affectionately thanked her parents for this indulgence, and retired to dream of French verbs, conjugations, and the abbé, and to slightly upbraid herself for having sometimes dared to fancy her parents were not quite so indulgent as their circumstances would permit.

Animated with her present prospects, Augusta rose at an early hour, full of hope and gladness, and entered on her very many domestic duties with even more than her usual alacrity and cheerfulness; her father's breakfast was prepared, her mother's given her in bed, where increased debility now confined her until

midday ; Miriam and Robert were taught their lessons, Edward courted into some quiet employ, and even the fretful Gordon amused. The domestic duties of the house were likewise dependent on Augusta's superintendance ; her eye and hand were equally called into action, and the powers of her mind, her activity, and her usefulness, appeared to grow in proportion as they were required or called forth.

Augusta was thus reared in the school of exertion, where no one faculty was allowed to rust, or grow poor from disuse ; and its benefits were felt through a life of severe trial and strange vicissitude, in the deep waters of affliction, and under the bright rays of prosperity that occasionally gilded the landscape.

Under the good abbé's direction Augusta made rapid progress in the French language ; her ear was naturally good, and any explanation once given was never forgotten ; thus she could speak the language in a shorter time than many girls would have

have taken to conjugate a verb correctly? if she did not speak quite grammatically, or quite idiomatically, her friends, and she had now several among the *émigré* nobility of France, would, she knew, correct her with pleasure, and she was most grateful for every little correction of the kind.

The abbé generally gave his favourite pupil her lesson in the afternoon, and very frequently remained to tea, in compliance with Mrs. St. Orme's general invitation, whose quick eye had detected that the fine cambric frills which adorned his hands and bosom were attached to a garment of the very coarsest texture, and whose generous heart would have reproached her with the trifling sum she paid him for his excellent instructions, had not his active pupil succeeded in procuring him several others, less assiduous, and richer than herself.

Augusta reaped considerable advantage from the lengthened visits of her preceptor, and never failed to order the coffee of

of a better quality on the days he came ; this, added to his drinking an enormous quantity of sugar, gave offence, first to Mr. St. Orme, who considered that a man in the low circumstances of the abbé, should be well content with coffee such as he drank, and the same quantity of sugar. Augusta was severely reprimanded for extravagance, and for encouraging it in a man whose poverty demanded self-denial. It was in vain she urged the force of long habit, and the privations he was condemned to when alone ; it only made the matter worse. St. Orme, who detested every thing approaching to an epicure or gourmand, was stubborn ; the coffee should be made as usual, and Augusta found she must yield, or lose the pleasure of the abbé's company at her tea-table.

It was with acute pain that Augusta soon after discovered a shade of offended pride in her preceptor ; towards her it was scarcely perceptible, yet even she *felt* a difference ;

difference ; but Mrs. St. Orme, who, like all nervous people, talked a great deal, would talk about religion and the errors of the Catholic church, explain, according to her own views, certain passages in holy writ, which she thought bore on the subject, and annoy her proud visitor by well-meant but injudicious attempts at conversion.

Augusta, whose more liberal opinions made her writhe under this discipline, had always found some difficulty, although aided by the abbé's imperfect knowledge of English, in warding off her mother's attacks, softening her expressions, and diverting attention ; but she now found that difficulty considerably increased ; the offended pride of the *émigré* was visible in every word and look, his visits were shortened, and his adieu, though strictly polite, cold and formal. No sooner was he gone than Mrs. St. Orme would inveigh against his pride, his stubbornness, and his extravagance, and be quite angry at

at his wilful perseverance in religious error, when she had so clearly pointed out to him the plain and only path to heaven. This was a new species of torture to Augusta, and one that mortified her exceedingly; for though she would not have avowed so much to her parents, it was a question with Augusta, whether Romanism, as her mother called it, or any other *ism* that differed from the established church, was the worst. She had the highest opinion of the good sense and piety of her parents, and for their sake respected the sect to which they belonged; but she had read from the records of unerring truth, that "*by the fruit shall the tree be known;*" and Augusta thought the most perfect, the most beautiful fruit she had ever known, had been produced in the rich and extensive ground of the established church. True, she acknowledged her acquaintance with it was limited; doubtless many trees there produced bad fruit—but what of that? had she not seen  
the

the apples of bitterness, whose beautiful outsides were filled with ashes, bitter ashes, borne by stately trees, in the small enclosure with which she was best acquainted?

Another circumstance tended to the liberality of Augusta's religious opinions, and confirmed her in tenderness towards members of the Catholic church. Soon after Augusta became acquainted with the abbé Duprée, he began to talk to her about *une pauvre malade*, whom he described as poor and deserted, but whom he thought had seen better days. At his next visit Augusta inquired for the sick woman, and the result of her inquiries was a determination to visit her, and see how far it was possible to relieve her.

Augusta found on the damp floor of a miserable kitchen, lying on a bag of shavings, and covered by one ragged blanket, the remains of what had once been youth and beauty. The poor creature's story was simple but full of wo. Kathleen owed her birth to an Irish renter, who  
beside

beside herself had a large family of ragged, merry brats to provide for. Early in life she was taken into the family of the nobleman on whose estate her father lived; here considerable pains was taken with her education. Kathleen was handsome, good principled, and affectionate—could do all her young mistress required, and a great deal that her old master did not require. Thus when lady Susan determined on eloping with a gallant navy captain, Kathleen arranged every thing for deceiving the father, and prosecuting the daughter's plan with facility, good-nature, and thoughtlessness—"bekace the ould lord was so cross to the swate darlingt." With them Kathleen came to England, after a short visit to Gretna Green, and another to the house of a Catholic priest: in captain Graham and his young bride she found an indulgent master and mistress, even more thoughtless and giddy than herself, and two years rolled away unheeded.

The

The captain was then ordered to a foreign station, and lady Susan, whose father, a bigoted Catholic, had constantly rejected every effort of the young people towards reconciliation, was distracted at the idea of being left behind; but her situation, which promised a second child in a few months, and other circumstances, forbid all thought of accompanying her brave husband. It now appeared that Kathleen had been six months the wife of a sailor belonging to her master's ship, and had herself the prospect of becoming a mother. It is not in the nature of a young Irishwoman to *fret*; she will weep violently, but it is "*the tear forgot as soon as shed*."

Lady Susan and her maid parted from their husbands with tears, but looked forward with joy to a reunion—a reunion, alas! that was never to take place. The captain and his faithful sailor fell side by side, bravely defending their country's cause, four days after lady Susan had given

given birth to a son, and died within an hour after. Now it was that poor Kathleen saw the crimes she had been guilty of; she had encouraged disobedience in a daughter, and been ungrateful towards a beneficent master—she was now reaping the reward.

An aunt of lady Susan's lived at Clifton, to her, and to lord Belford, Kathleen wrote in agonizing terms, for directions how to dispose of the corpse and the children; and the same letter that gave orders for the quiet interment of the beautiful lady Susan Graham, desired her to take the children to Clifton, and informed her that captain Graham had fallen by his country's foes.

Mrs. St. Barb received the heart-broken Kathleen and her “sweet childer” with reproach and bitterness. The children were to be forwarded to Belford Castle, but Kathleen was peremptorily forbidden to appear there; her appearance told a sorrowful tale, but yet the poor girl hoped

her

her husband lived—and Mrs. St. Barb told her, however painful her fate, it would be good enough, indeed too good for one who had thus trampled down all laws, human and divine.

Deserted, and with a small stock of money, Kathleen took one small room in Bristol, where her story gained but little credit—though while she could pay for every thing, she was treated with civility. Here she ascertained that she too was a widow, and here she gave birth to a son, whom she pressed to her aching bosom, and wept over in agonies, till then unthought of. Kathleen was the child of indulgence; sorrow, low living, want of comforts, and indifferent nursing, acted fatally on a frame constitutionally delicate. Her money was all spent, her ornaments followed, then the most costly of her clothes; insult succeeded to poverty, and the *Irish baggage* was tauntingly ordered to take her blarney and her brat somewhere else. Driven from house to house, often

often compelled to pass the night under a shed, poor Kathleen, without well knowing why, tied the little all she now possessed in a small bundle, and wrapping her cloak around her baby and her own spare form, took the road to Bath; but after much wandering, and many sufferings, there and elsewhere, accident, or rather Providence, brought her to the city where Augusta now found her, and lodged her in the house where the abbé Duprée's necessities had driven him when first introduced to Mrs. Miles.

Augusta found Kathleen a sincere penitent, firm in the principles of the Romish church, but so filled with humility, pious resignation, and heavenly hope, that as day after day she watched over and administered some light refreshment to the wasting sufferer, or read for her the prayers of her church, the tears would rapidly course each other, and drive from the blooming cheek of Augusta every shade of colour. Her own purse was too slender

to

to admit of much being drawn from it, but her heart was rich in benevolent kindness, and her resources various. There were in the city many Irish Catholics of rank and fashion, and to them Augusta applied for that assistance she was unable herself to afford the dying Kathleen. It was impossible to resist the pleading of the youthful petitioner ; her really elegant person and manners obtained all she asked ; and Kathleen, removed into a decent room, and nursed with tenderness, wept her thanks, and offered up warm prayers for the welfare of the benevolent girl who had sought her in distress and misery : but nothing could arrest the hand of death ; it was laid on the mother and child—and the poor little boy sighed his last breath on the lap of Augusta, just one week before she closed the dying eyes of the ill-fated, imprudent, long-suffering, and repentant Kathleen. As Augusta gently placed the crucifix on the breathless bosom of her who had so eagerly grasped

grasped it in her dying moments, the tears which she shed washed away the last shade of prejudice against a church, among whose members, whatever its errors may be, Augusta was now fully convinced there existed some humble, pious, and active Christians, who disdained not the bed of sickness or poverty, when a suffering sister lay extended on it.

## CHAPTER V.

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Since trifles make the sum of human things,  
And half our misery from our foibles springs ;  
Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,  
And though but few can serve, yet all may please ;  
Oh, let the ungentle spirit learn from hence,  
A small unkindness is a great offence.

HANNAH MORE.

AUGUSTA with tearful eyes cast a last look into the humble grave of her hapless acquaintance Kathleen, and taking the hand of little Miriam, turned from it with a heart softened towards all mankind, and disposed to view human nature through a chastened melancholy medium. Occupied with her own reflections, Augusta either did not reply to Miriam's many questions, or replied so as to awaken the child's curiosity, who ever accustomed to have all her inquiries answered with the

most patient indulgence, and encouraged to make them on all she saw, now trembled and began to weep, because—"Sister was very ill or very angry with her." Augusta aroused herself, and smilingly assured the child that she was not angry, and had only a bad headach; "but that," continued she, "is, you know, Miriam, a very unpleasant companion, and will not admit of much talking; beside, I must be careful now, for our good friend the abbé will be at home perhaps before us, and I must, you know, talk with him all I can."

"But, sister, will you not go and see Betsey Morgan's blind child, and hear him say his hymn, now we are so near?" asked Miriam in a petitioning voice.

"I wish very much to see the poor fellow, my dear, so if it will afford you any pleasure, we will pay him a short visit," replied Augusta.

The visit was not calculated to raise Augusta's drooping spirits, or brighten the gloomy prospect she just now had of life;

life; nor was her conversation with the abbé of the most lively kind; after a few words to the memory of Kathleen, it brought to his memory (as every thing did), some circumstances of the revolution; and the sanguinary cruel scenes he had witnessed were again detailed for the edification of his unwearied, interested pupil.

It unfortunately happened that during Augusta's absence, her mother had several times required her assistance. St. Orme, too, had inquired why the girls were from home at that time of the day; and a *friendly* morning visitor wondered Mrs. St. Orme allowed her daughter to spend so much time, "*and of course money*," among beggars! Charity was a fine thing, but it called for a great deal of time and money; and between that and her "*learning*," laying an emphasis on the word, Miss St. Orme could have but little time for any thing else.

Mrs. St. Orme replied with becoming spirit, "that her daughter knew how to be

charitable at a small expence, and she believed few girls so thoroughly blended good sense with domestic usefulness." But it was the fault of St. Orme's character to be sensibly alive to such foolish, ill-natured observations, to see the faults of his own family more clearly than their virtues, to shrink from the touch of irony, and in such cases fancy others more clear-sighted than himself; he was very fond of Augusta, and very proud of her; yet any malicious person could in five minutes, and without naming her, render him dissatisfied with her pursuits, displeased with her conduct, and severe in his censures on her general demeanour. Such was the case this day, but no opportunity occurred for either parent to evince their feelings until the family met at tea.—"Be careful of the sugar," said St. Orme, in a stern voice, as Augusta put it into the tea-cup of the abbé, who had of late declined taking coffee; she raised her eyes, and met those of her father angrily fixed on her—

her—hers immediately filled with tears, but a deep clutch and a proud rising of the spirit sent them back again. Every word either the abbé or Augusta said was sure to meet a contradiction, and not always in the politest terms. Augusta saw some little acerbity of temper threatened her with an unpleasant evening, but exerted herself to divert the attention of the abbé, whose quick sense of pride she had so often seen ready to take fire at what he felt an affront; but all her care was useless: fearful of drawing a remark from her father, she left the abbé to sweeten his own tea, hoping it would pass unnoticed: as monsieur put lump after lump into his cup, St. Orme elevated his eyebrows, and a smile of contempt sat on his curled lip, which catching the attention of his wife, she exclaimed—"Good Heavens, sir! what an immense quantity of sugar you drink! it must be very expensive to you!"

The abbé bent haughtily as Augusta remarked—"Foreigners I think generally

take their tea and coffee sweeter than the English; and our family in particular accustom themselves to very little, so that almost every one appears to us to use a great deal of sugar."

"Every one should accustom themselves to do with as little as they can," sternly observed St. Orme; "and whether they eat at their own expence, or that of others, should be careful not to waste. Sugar altogether is a luxury, and may very well be done without, and should be, by those who find it difficult to live."

The abbé's face was crimson, as he politely bowed, saying—"The Frenchmen generally know to do *without* better than the Englishmen, *mais n'importe!*"

Augusta trembled, for she feared a final blow was given to all intercourse between her teacher and the family. He rose a few minutes after and took leave. Augusta hoped he would find an hour to give her an extra lesson this week. This was said with a view to conciliate. The abbé bowed

bowed on her hand, uttered, in the low voice of deep feeling, his sense of her kindness, and disappeared.

"I fear, poor man, he is mortally offended," sighed Augusta.

"And no matter either," returned her mother; "if he is so hasty as not to bear any remark, he is unfit for general society."

"Misfortune, mamma, renders a delicate or a proud mind tenacious, and it was not a little the poor man had to bear with this evening."

"Oh, nonsense, Augusta! You would fain persuade yourself that this man has cause for offence in the few simple observations made by your father or myself to-day. Do you for a moment suppose he is any where given the consideration he is here?—always treated as a gentleman, and welcomed at all times to the family table!"

"I do indeed, mamma, suppose that every sensible person would treat a foreigner in distress, who visibly bears the mark of superior life, as a gentleman, which

is more than has always been done here," returned Augusta, her bosom swelling with anger, as she recollects all that had been said of the unfortunate sugar, &c. Her father coming in at the moment, added a sarcastic remark on waste of time, folly, and extravagance; Augusta's feelings were wound to their highest pitch.—" Ah !" cried she, " I see how it is—the poor man was too kind to *me*, to be longer tolerated —his instructions are an advantage—an indulgence, too great to be allowed *me*, whose legitimate portion is labour and severity." So saying, she escaped the storm thus drawn on herself, by immediately leaving the room, and hastening to her little chamber, where, fastening the door, she fell on her bed, overcome by the agitating and contending emotions which tore her proud and sensitive bosom.—" What," cried she, in a passionate burst of tears— " what have I to do with waste of time! —with folly! —with extravagance! when every hour is so full of employ that I scarcely

scarcely sleep?—Folly too! Yes, it is folly and waste of time also to spend my life as I do here—a slave to every one, without fee or reward; and extravagance too! when I am driven to my wits end to look like a gentlewoman, and give a very mere trifle to the poor of what I get, surely I may be allowed the independent use of what I do possess! Ah, poor dear Kathleen! would that my spirit were as peacefully at rest as yours, and my aching head laid as low! then at least I should be free from this continued fault—this reviling and browbeating, that drives me mad! Yet why do I complain? the world knows not my grief. By our acquaintance I am considered a darling of both parents, and the child of indulgence. Be still, then, proud and wounded spirit; your resources are from within; maintain your independence, and rise above oppression! those who will not be pleased, are more to be pitied than she who cannot please.”

With this flattering unction laid to her

heart, Augusta rose from her bed, bathed her swollen eyes, drew her beautiful hair a little over them, and went in search of Miriam, whose hour for retiring was considerably past. She found the little girl fretful from weariness, but resolutely refusing to be undressed until sister came to do it, though mamma herself coaxed the petted child to let her put her to bed, for sister was cross, and perhaps would not come; but Miriam was stubborn; sister had been her nurse, governess, and instructress, and to no one else was Miriam so attached, or so thoroughly amenable.

"There she is!" cried the little girl, running towards Augusta; "I said you would come to undress me, and hear my prayers. Mamma told me you were cross, and would not come; but you are never cross with Miriam, are you, my pretty sister?" asked the child, fondly turning her arms around her sister's neck, and putting aside her hair.

"No, my love," returned her sister,  
"nor

"nor to any one else; Augusta is never cross; she is sometimes sadly vexed, but never, never cross."

"If you are not cross, Augusta, you are dreadfully passionate," rejoined her mother, who was sitting in Miriam's room.  
"I don't know who you think is to bear with it; if you had not the most indulgent father in the world, you would not dare to take such liberties."

"I hope, mamma, I do not draw very largely on the indulgence of my papa; it is very seldom I venture on any reply, let him say what he will; and I am quite sure nobody on earth can be more grateful than I am for every kindness. But surely I do not deserve to be charged with waste of time, folly, or extravagance; those at least are not my faults."

"Why, no, my dear, I don't think they are, nor does your papa; but the fact is, that while you were out to-day, Mrs. Cowper called, and some of her remarks on learned and charitable young ladies vexed

your father ; then I unfortunately wanted you two or three times ; this happening just upon the abbé's visit, altogether annoyed him a little, and put him out of temper ; but you should bear those things ; they are but trifles after all, and such a father should never be contradicted. You are a very useful, good girl, and you know we are both very fond of you."

Augusta's heart was the seat of affection and gratitude. Throwing her arms around her mother's neck, she fondly kissed her cheek, implored to be forgiven, and earnestly assured her she would rather die than give either of her dear parents real cause for displeasure.

Mrs. St. Orme rejoiced to see her smiles return ; and kindly bidding her see that the children were properly taken care of, adding—"I can always depend on you," quitted the nursery, where a visit of ten minutes was the utmost her shattered nerves would bear, although her anxious footsteps were frequently bent that way.

Augusta

Augusta performed all her nursery duties, and strove earnestly to recover her usual cheerful serenity; but the various incidents of the day had been of a painful and agitating nature; she had suffered her passions, which were of the strongest kind, to gain a degree of mastery over her better sense, that grieved and distressed her; she had offended a father she adored, her head ached violently, and her spirits were yet disturbed. She would most gladly have gone to bed without speaking, or seeing any one again that night; but having always been accustomed to receive her father's blessing, she did not like to retire without it; beside, she feared he would think it mere temper. The fear of this overruled every other feeling, and Augusta descended to supper, anxious to acknowledge her fault, and feel happy again in the smile of her parents, and the performance of her multiform duties. But Augusta's was a spirit that required encouragement; though lofty, it was timid,

and

and though humble, proud. One kind word or look would have brought her to her father's feet—one expression of tender feeling would have melted her to tears of sorrow and contrition; but no such expression, no such word or look awaited her. St. Orme was more seriously offended than Augusta had calculated on. He was intently perusing the newspaper. As she entered the room he raised his eyes, but instantly dropped them again, with an expression of cool contempt, that checked the glowing feelings of his child. Still she determined to make an effort.—“Are you ready for supper, papa?” in the most affectionate tone, met no reply. Augusta’s blood chilled.—“Shall I see for mamma?” asked she, in the steadiest voice she could command.

St. Orme raised his face, clothed in severity, as he sternly replied—“What!”

“ Shall I see for mamma?”

“ I don’t care what you do; it is nothing to me!”

All Augusta's humility and tenderness fled before this chilling blast; her blood froze—her temples throbbed, and quick as her unsteady steps would carry her, she left the room, and hastened in search of her mother, not daring to think, not daring to speak, but on subjects of no consequence.

Supper, usually the most social repast in St. Orme's family, passed in almost total silence, for Mrs. St. Orme was vexed at what she considered Augusta's stubborn pride, yet forbore to remark on it before her father. The servants were summoned, and Augusta performed her part of the evening service with a faltering voice and tearful eye, for the holy subject of her reading again subdued her, and every angry feeling melted before it. Augusta busied herself in locking drawers and closets, that she might regain some portion of steadiness before she approached to receive her accustomed good-night.—“God bless you, papa!” said she, presenting her ruby lips.

A cool

A cool "good-night," with scarcely a touch of her lips, was the only return. Augusta kissed her mother, but could not speak, and was out of sight in an instant.

"You are severe upon that poor child, my dear," said Mrs. St. Orme, in a deprecating tone of voice.

"And you are a fool," returned he. "I will break that haughty spirit, or break her heart."

"Her heart will be the first to break, I believe. Do pray, St. Orme, recollect how often you have admired her high independent spirit, her fine abilities, and her thirst for knowledge — recollect too her warm affectionate heart is not formed for severity; she is certainly the best girl in the world; you should not be angry for trifles. Poor child! she will not sleep to-night, and after all, it is only with yourself you are quarrelling."

"Let her remain awake if she will then; I will not be insulted by Augusta, or any one else; nor allow her so to act as to bring down

down the animadversions of my acquaintance on my conduct," returned the angry father, who was in fact more angry with himself than with his daughter, with whom he chose to preserve an appearance of resentment, merely to indulge in temper.

Mrs. St. Orme could not retire to her bed without first visiting Augusta. She found the poor girl in a passion of tears, the Bible open before her, and her aching temples supported by her hands.

"Go to your bed, my dear Augusta," said the affectionate mother. "Why, bless me, my child, what importance you are giving to a trifle, thus to distress yourself about nothing!"

"Do you call it nothing, mamma, to be repulsed and treated as I have been this evening?"

"Remember, my love, you were the aggressor. Come, the book before you would, if you will allow it, teach you how to control these exuberant feelings; do not let trifles rob you of your bliss. You will

will there find that ‘a father *chasteneth* the child he loves;’ forget all this nonsense, my child, or you will vex your father.”

“ Oh, my father told me this evening he cared not what I did; indeed, mamma, it is very hard; nobody ever received such unmerited severity, I believe, as I am constantly made to feel.”

“ Do you think your father or I sleep on a bed of roses, Augusta?—Are we without trials?” asked her mother, in a tone of voice that turned the current of her feelings in an instant. It was the first word approaching to confidential complaint she had ever heard her mother utter; the first cool reference she had ever heard her make to a want of perfect happiness. Her own observation had led her to remark many a concealed source of uneasiness, that accounted for her mother’s irritability and feverish restlessness, but never before had her mother led her to notice it; and now, forgetting her own sorrows in the question put

put to her, she replied, with all the enthusiasm of her nature—"Yes, my beloved mamma, for you both have that within which the world neither gives nor can take away, but which would pluck from sorrow its thorn, and rob even envy of its power to sting. Forgive me; henceforward my griefs shall be my own; never will I again insert a thorn where I would sacrifice half my life to extract it. I have a thousand faults, but I will not vex *you* again."

"God bless you, my warm-hearted child! he alone can correct your faults, or smooth my pillow; but he will do both, if we ask it—good night!" returned Mrs. St. Orme, as she again sought her own chamber; and Augusta having poured out her heart before that Power she had ever been taught to adore, and which she now sought as her place of refuge and unerring director, laid her aching head on her pillow in more composure than the events of such a harassing day had allowed her to hope for.

The bright sunshine of a summer morning

ing dispelled Augusta's peaceful sleep, and aroused her in renovated health and spirits. Her customary visits to the nursery and her mother's bedside being paid, she descended in search of her father, who she found studiously perusing a new publication in his own little parlour.

It is not in nature to be insensible to the warm greeting of animated affectionate youth, and it certainly was not in the nature of St. Orme, whose fond paternal heart suffered severely, even while inflicting pain on the objects of his love and pride, among whom Augusta ranked pre-eminent, and before whose animated smiles and cheerful prattle his sternness melted as snow beneath the cheering influence of the solar rays, and before breakfast was removed, every trace of displeasure or gloom had vanished from both father and daughter.

Some mention being made of the evening, Augusta said she was engaged to spend it with Frances Seymour.

" You

" You go there very often," returned her father; " do you always meet strangers there, or pass the evening alone?"

" Neither the one or the other, papa, exactly; Frances receives her own company, and having a large acquaintance, it usually happens that several call in the course of the evening without invitation, or without remaining long there: her intimate friends are all persons of considerable information and great intellectual endowment."

" But there is always fiddling, and singing, and nonsense there—is there not?" asked St. Orme.

" What, papa!" exclaimed Augusta in surprise—" fiddling and nonsense! oh no, nothing like it! we have frequently some excellent music and singing, for Frances has several friends who perform admirably; and she is no despicable musician herself; but no nonsense, no fiddling; it is the last house in the world for any thing of that kind, though Mr. and Mrs. Seymour indulge

dulge her in every wish and desire : Frances possesses too much mind, too much good sense, to encourage nonsense or folly."

" I don't know what else all this singing and company is," returned St. Orme : " I am surprised that a plain religious man like Seymour allows it ; besides I believe many of those who visit Frances are no better than infidels."

" I have never met with any one there whom I have had reason to suppose an infidel," rejoined Augusta, seriously ; " if so, I hope, papa, you believe I would not associate with, or meet such a person a second time."

" I have no doubt, my dear, you would most cautiously avoid such a person, if you knew it ; but the fact is, you do not know them until the mischief is done."

" Surely, papa, I must know an infidel by his conversation, or at least by his arguments."

" No such thing ; you would fancy it very fine philosophy, very sublime, liberal argument,

argument, and know nothing about the matter."

This was touching on a very tender point with poor Augusta, who, like most very young people who are at all observant, plumed herself on her penetration, and always resented the slightest imputation cast on her powers of discernment. Smarting under the last observation, she quickly replied—"I am extremely sorry you have such a mean opinion of my judgment, papa, but if you desire it, I will make a sacrifice of all the pleasure I receive at Mr. Seymour's, rather than run the hazard of my principles being contaminated by associating with the characters you describe."

"Your principles are of very little worth, Augusta, if they are capable of contamination. I should not choose to offend an old friend like Seymour by your ceasing to visit Frances, as you have always been accustomed to do; your reading has done you very little good, if you do not know

know how to conduct yourself aright : it is time however I should away to business, and occupy myself with subjects of more consequence—so good morning ! I have several appointments to keep, and persons to see."

" It is very strange," thought Augusta, as her father disappeared, " if there is any doubt as to the character of Frances's numerous visitors, that papa should treat the matter so lightly; yet there certainly must be some cause for observations which only tend to vex one: but it appears—well, no matter, time passes on;" and again a dark shade, that came like a blighting mildew over her warm enthusiastic feelings, and sent the fresh current of her blood back to the heart in fearful chilliness, passed before her eyes; a doubt, a suspicion, that there was more pleasure found in pointing out little imperfections, and in magnifying them into faults, than in correcting them, or directing her aright; a chilly sense of neglect or contempt.

Not

Not for worlds would Augusta have given form or words to these indistinct vagaries of her imagination; still they acted on her character, repressed her vivacity, taught her to hide the workings of her mind, and fostered the innate pride of a yet unregenerate heart. It was therefore with peculiar pain that Augusta received a most respectful note, written in elegant French, from monsieur l'Abbé, expressing his deep regret that circumstances prevented his further attendance on Miss St. Orme, whom he should ever be proud to consider one of his warmest friends, and his most promising pupil; the few lessons he had given since being paid he requested she would accept, and politely bade her a final adieu!

Augusta wept over the note the tears of genuine sorrow; she respected, nay almost loved, the old man, for the many excellences his character had daily presented to her view; she esteemed his high bearing and noble independence, and saw in his determination to support himself, and not

submit to affront, all those characteristic traits that met her own ideas of a superior being; and that such a man should have been insulted while striving to instruct and improve her, grieved her, mortified her beyond expression. She felt nothing could ever repay him for the advantage she had derived from his instruction, or the humiliation he had sustained, and cast about in her mind how best to pay him the few shillings due to him, without further wounding his pride.

A very light purse and a slender wardrobe had hitherto been the portion of Augusta; but she had so few needless expences, and was so good a contriver and economist, that this truth had never been suspected, especially as Augusta St. Orme was ever ready with her contribution to the aid of suffering poverty—was known to visit the poor a great deal—ever paid her part liberally, and was never heard to say—"I cannot afford it."

With the departure of the abbé, Augusta

gusta knew her education ceased ; but that he should not lose what was justly his due, nor be subject to further affront on her account, she was determined : she therefore sent to his usual address (his lodgings were never made known) a note, regretting his loss, and thanking him for his instructions, with all the warmth and gratitude she really felt, but without referring to the cause of his departure, or to pecuniary matters. She then purchased at a shop where she thought herself quite unknown a quantity of the best Turkey coffee and fine sugar, to an amount far beyond what was due to him ; and by a little girl who was devoted to Augusta, and whoshe knew would faithfully discharge her mission, sent it to the same address, directed for monsieur l'abbé Duprée.

Having settled this little affair to her own satisfaction, Augusta returned to her customary round of duties and employ, without again reverting to her late instructor, but with cautious care not to lose any thing she had gained from him.

## CHAPTER VI.

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"Sirs," quoth the hermit, "you'll agree,  
That reason still our guide should be;  
And will admit her as the test,  
Of what is wise, and what is best."

WILKIE.

IT was about this time that Augusta, who in her frequent visits to her friend Frances Seymour, had met with many *enlightened* ladies and gentlemen, who by virtue of "high intellectual attainment," had discovered more than the Bible teaches, or than religion enjoins, was introduced by her to a captain Raybright, and his cousin the reverend Henry Glossit, both of them men of learning and travel, disciples of a new code of ethics, pupils of reason, declaimers against prejudice, and both of them refined gentlemen and men of taste, but opposite

posite in manner, person, and argument. It was something of this kind that St. Orme had foreseen and justly dreaded, in the promiscuous and heterogeneous society usually to be found at the house of Mr. Seymour, who being himself a plain, single-minded man, knew but little of what was passing around him, beyond the Christian society of which he was a steady member. He had given his only child an expensive education, a circumstance which he considered as giving her a decided superiority to himself, his wife, and the world in general: hence Frances reigned an empress in her father's house—selected her own apartments, received her own company, and formed her own opinions, without reference to the plain, saving parents, who were striving by every possible means to add guinea to guinea, wherewith to enrich their darling, whose conversation and conduct they were ready to believe soared beyond their limited comprehension, but to be such as the sensible and superior

must view with admiration, and the good must approve, or else Augusta St. Orme would not continue her friend; since of the rectitude and purity of Augusta's principles they both entertained the highest opinion.

The subject of conversation on this first evening of her meeting the cousins was a then popular work by a female writer, who had given publicity to herself and her work, by practically supporting the principles promulgated in her publication.

Captain Raybright boldly supported her cause, and with spirit and animation deserving a better subject, called her "the brightest genius of her age—a woman formed to redeem her sex from ignorance and slavery.—Her name," cried he, "shall live, when those of her opposers, her scorers, her contemners, shall have sunk into their native oblivion; her own sex will live to bless, and ours to honour, the woman who first dared to tear the blinding bandage of superstition from her

own

own eyes, and having clearly seen her rights and privileges, to exercise them herself, and point out the way to her fellow-sufferers, holding forth a supporting hand, and crying, ‘follow me, and be free !’

Frances Seymour smiled an assent, and lisped in accents of infantine simplicity—“ I fear, captain, but few will have the courage to follow her advice ; though I am sure so warm a champion as you are in the cause of female liberty should give all who hear you resolution, and must make many converts.”

“ The work itself, my dear Miss Seymour,” resumed the captain, “ the work itself will carry all before it ; it needs no champion, but will be sure to find many, very many—for arguments so clear, so simple, yet so grand, convincing, and comprehensive, never before appeared in print. You, I know, have read, and consequently admired the work ; but Miss St. Orme looks incredulous.”

“ Oh, Augusta,” exclaimed a Miss

Sykes, who sat by, quite a pupil of the new school, "Augusta I fancy is afraid such studies would unchristianize her! I urged her to read it the other day, and told her I had never felt the value of my own existence, never seen any thing worth living for, until I read this exquisite volume; yet I believe she has never opened it—have you, Augusta?"

"Never," returned Augusta, with a smile, "and for many good reasons; one of them simply, that I never saw the book."

"Allow me the pleasure of sending it to you," cried the officer and the clergyman in a breath.

"Thank you," returned Augusta. "But are you, sir," addressing the clergyman, "an advocate for such free principles? They appear to me unchristian, and certainly they are unchaste principles."

"There, my dear ma'am," simpered the clergyman in the softest accents imaginable, "you are quite wrong, and, excuse me, it is a more vulgar error than I should have

have expected from you, who in all you say evince so much good sense and superiority.” Augusta bowed, and the reverend Henry Glossit continued—“ It is prejudice only, my dear ma’am, that enforces the severe code of laws by which females are at present governed; prejudice likewise teaches you to think any infringement on that code must be unchaste, though no one doubts the chastity of a widow who marries a second, or even a third time, because it does not interfere with prejudice: but now listen to reason, nowhere contradicted by Scripture, but in many instances supported by it;—a young and lovely woman marries a man for whom she owns the return of a passionate attachment; she is no sooner *his own*, than possession and security destroy the charm that urged pursuit; he grows cool, capricious, sometimes brutal; the lady complaining, unhappy, querulous, and finally miserable; the husband becomes inconstant, but custom reconciles that; the neglected

glected wife meets with attentions it is her duty to repress, from amiable men, susceptible of her worth and beauty; the heart will not submit to prejudice, and her affections have fled from her tyrant, and settled on her adorer: what then so rational, so consonant to nature, so agreeable to the dictates of good sense and sound reason, and I will add to religion likewise, as the separation of a tie, no longer sanctioned by love, and the forming of that which the heart's best affections dictate?—What of unchaste, unchristian, or unseemly, is there in this? The heart is widowed and single—the person should be so likewise; this is the purest chastity, and prejudice alone enforces the really opposite creed of living with a man, become not only indifferent but disagreeable."

"This is a new argument to me, and I confess more plausible than convincing," returned Augusta, seeing this defender of inconstancy waited for some reply.—"I have attended to all you and our fair author's

Author's other friends have urged, without discovering any thing in your arguments that can in any way tend to the improvement of moral harmony ; since there is no knowing where these wanderings of the heart are to end, and woman loses her youth and beauty so much earlier than man, that it appears to me, according to your liberal plan, she is certain of being left to neglect in the decline of life, since no man will fall in love with a faithless wreck ; and her children, unattached by all the tender ties which now bind mother and children, and eager in pursuing the course their parents trod before, have neither time nor inclination to bestow all those thousand tender, kindly cares, that the autumn of female life so imperiously demands ; to whom can she look for support ?—where ask for care and kindness, but of those on whom her spring and summer have shed the warm rays of affection, life, comfort, and consolation ? and of these you would rob her. Oh, trust me,

me, sir, your reasoning is bad, your premises false, and your theory a delusion!"

The reverend gentleman bowed obsequiously, and with a smile of the most perfect placidity, resumed his arguments, urging a thousand reasons why women should be at liberty to change their husbands as often as their places of abode, and striving to make it appear that children under this system would be more attached to their parents, particularly their mothers, than at present, when subject to perpetual scenes of domestic jar and discord.

But Augusta could not be convinced; there was nothing in it that met her views of purity, of truth, of the real enjoyment of life here, and the looking forward to a life eternal; and though her opponent was of that class of men of all others the most loved and revered by her, and though he constantly referred to the Bible, she could nowhere in his argument discover an agreement with the dictates of that holy book, nor in his manner and conversation

the

the stamp of his Master's mission : but she checked the current of her thoughts as they struck upon "*his Master.*" And who is his master ? certainly not the Divine Redeemer—certainly not he who said—"Go forth and preach my Gospel to all the world"—certainly not the humble, persecuted friend of sinners—he who enjoined heavenly-mindedness, forgiveness, and long suffering, as tests of our religion—he who said—"Be ye holy as I am holy;" this is not his master.—Who then is?—He whose work he is thus zealous in performing.

Augusta's countenance so plainly discovered the tenour of her thoughts, that as the bland and gentle Glossit looked full in her face to give force to a favourite point he was urging, the expression of contempt and horror that sat there startled him, and at once cut short his flowing speech.

Augusta immediately recovered herself, and seeing his eyes, which to do them justice were of the finest order, fixed on her with a look of astonishment—"Allow me,  
sir,"

sir," said she, "to reply by way of question," encouraged by an acquiescent bow—"are you at present fulfilling the duty of a cure?" asked she.

"I am, ma'am, over my own populous parish; the living is a part of my patrimonial inheritance, and situated in the most delightful part of Berkshire."

"And is the rectory——"

"Vicarage, ma'am."

"Vicarage then—Is it under the superintendance of a wife?—Are you married?"

"No indeed, that happiness is yet to come."

"Well, one more query.—If the enlightened female, of whose extraordinary work we have been speaking, were to weary of her present engagement, not you know the first time she has done so, and would consent to become your wife, would you place her at the head of your establishment, and feel yourself and vicarage honoured?"

"A home

"A home stroke faith, Henry!" shouted the officer.

"To the point! to the point!" cried several voices at once.

"The *argumentum ad hominem*," returned the clergyman, with great good nature.

"And you would have preferred the *argumentum ad passiones* from such a fair appellant. But to the question; Miss St. Orme awaits your answer."

"And shall have it most honestly," replied he, turning to Augusta.—"Know then, fair advocate for prejudice and submission, that were the enlightened Mary as fair as she certainly is clever, as young as Miss St. Orme, as blooming as Hebe, and were she to escape a thousand more attempts at drowning, hanging, and so forth, and possessed of immense riches to boot, yet should she never preside over the heart, the imagination, the table, or the establishment of Henry Glossit."

"Our argument is finished then, and I have triumphed!" replied Augusta, gracefully

fully rising, and going to the other end of the apartment, through the folding door of which she had discovered two cherub children tearing in pieces a beautiful stand of flowers—" You too are smiling mischiefs I perceive," said Augusta, drawing them from the stand.—" Why do you tear to pieces what you cannot repair?"

" It is nature so to do," said a young man of fine exterior, who had followed Augusta, and who had a long time paid her the most incessant and devoted attention, but in a manner that spoke only the affection of a brother, and elicited no other return than sisterly kindness, which long acquaintance authorized and approved—" it is nature so to do. So you have torn to pieces all this poor man's fine-spun cob-web arguments, on which he prided himself, and it is well if you have not torn his heart also, for I rather think he pursued his chain of nonsense more for the sake of looking at you, than in the hope of convincing

vincing you, though he may hope to recommend himself to your favour."

"Good Heavens, Edwin Heathfield ! are you too quitting the plain road of common sense, and learning to garble like those would-be philosophers ?" cried Augusta, turning from the children and the flowers. "That being possess a heart ! or that heart know how to love !—hope to recommend himself he may, for *self* is the idol of his vain imagination : oh, why is his holy calling so disgraced ! strip him, for honesty sake, of his gown and band ! this is indeed the ' wolf in sheep's clothing ;' he would assuredly ' devour widow's houses, and leave their children desolate,' by introducing his vile principles, by trampling the laws of God and man under feet, and taking from the desolate and oppressed their last hope, the refuge from the storm, their rock of defence.

' Has he a soul ? With his departing breath  
A form shall hail him at the gates of death ;

The

The spectre conscience shrieking through the gloom,  
Man, we shall meet again beyond the tomb!"

"The disgust you feel for such a character, my dear Augusta, is natural to your pure mind; yet I fear the world will present but too many such to our view, and under this new system of things, human nature seems at liberty to indulge its worst propensities. His church is his own patrimony, you hear; so there he sits secure, and sputters forth his almost blasphemies."

"Yes," replied Augusta, "it is, as my dear father frequently observes, not the disposition of the man, but the disposition of the property, that is considered. 'I have,' says a man of wealth, 'a valuable living in my gift—my second son shall therefore be a clergyman; my friend, general so-and-so, has great interest, and no son—my third shall therefore enter the army under his auspices.' Here then are the hero and the Christian ready cut and dried, no matter what their tastes, principles, or opinions, may

may be.—But here comes this sapient priest.

‘ Be sure when you behold him, fly  
Out of all earshot, or you die.’

“ Severe as your quotation may sound, Miss St. Orme, do you know it is a compliment ? ” said captain Raybright, who had overheard Augusta’s last few sentences.

“ I scarcely know how you construe such a sentence into a compliment,” replied she; “ but I suppose you consider any thing, even if it be vice, that gives consequence, is complimentary.”

“ Why, my dear Miss St. Orme, there is in plain matter of fact neither vice nor virtue : what is vice in one man, is virtue in another ; ‘ one murder makes a villain, millions a hero.’ The petty theft of the starving shoplifter shall be punished by death, while the powerful grasp of ministerial plunder shall close on its millions, and expect the thanks of the people. The poor undone wretch, who, despised by her own

sex,

sex, and deserted by ours, seeks a miserable precarious subsistence from the streets, shall be given her lodging in a watch-house, and her food for a month in Bride-well, while the same crime struts boldly under a coronet, and is rewarded by grants and endowments! where then is vice? where then is virtue? a name, a bubble—nowhere to be found but in the imagination! It is our own optic powers, our own views of a thing, that degrade it to a vice, or elevate it to a virtue."

"All sophistry, captain Raybright," returned Augusta, playfully; "not one particle of clear substantial reason in it. You draw your inferences from circumstances only temporary or accidental, and mistake your question by proving one thing instead of another; hence you carry but little conviction."

"Upon my honour, Miss St. Orme, I encounter no mean antagonist in you, I find; quite a logical reasoner, and rhetorical little speaker; yet I do not give up my

my point so readily : upon what code of laws do you found your definitions of vice and virtue?"

"Upon two codes," returned Augusta, "that I am not quite sure captain Raybright will allow to be immutable, and if not, our argument closes at once, namely, those of the Old and New Testament; the plain simple truth is there clearly laid down, and all that is essential to our present and future welfare is so distinctly pointed out, that 'he who runs may read.'

"Do you say this of the entire book, Miss St. Orme?"

"By no means, sir; there are many parts so obscurely worded, that it requires the researches of the learned to exactly define their meaning; but you will observe, that all such passages are those which do not bear on our moral conduct or future welfare in the least; but the code of laws given to Moses in the Old Testament, and by the Saviour of Mankind in the new, are plain and simple to the commonest capacity;

capacity; they clearly distinguish between vice and virtue: add to these the laws of your country, and you need not remain in doubt as to the commission of crime, or the preservation of virtue."

"Allowing your argument its full weight," replied the captain, "how constantly are those laws broken by the best and wisest of men and women too! even infants break them every hour—plainly proving that our natures are so constituted as to render their observation impracticable; where then lies the value of laws that must of necessity constantly be broken? and how can that be a direction which it is impossible to follow? have we not here a clear and indubitable deduction, founded on the evidence of reason, that such a code of laws is futile and insufficient?"

"I think not, captain; and though no logician, and never before drawn into such an argument, it appears to me that you are begging the question, by taking what is

is not granted as a supposed proof; you have stated a favourite, but not self-evident axiom, hence what I believe you call the evidence of intuition is against you. Mistakes as to the things that make for our eternal interests are most unhappily the fashion of the day. I see clearly that the sources of error are many with respect to the Scriptures; such as want of diligence in investigating their sacred truths—judging of them by their first appearance only—prejudices formed from consulting foreign authors—not comparing one passage with another, and so forming a hasty judgment—and a variety of others, which perhaps are more difficult for men of sense, education, and reading to avoid, than for females, and those whose reading is more confined."

A bustle at the opposite end of the room now drew the attention of Augusta and her little circle, among whom none more sincerely admired or esteemed her than her adversary the captain, who felt at that moment,

ment, that if he could exchange his own anarchy and confusion of thought and sensation, for Augusta's clear, firm principles, her faith in Holy Writ, as free from fanaticism as folly, and as immoveable as the earth, he should gain more by the exchange than Cæsar or Pompey ever won: so true is it, that however men of the world rail against purity and religion, and affect to treat it as a chimera, to be found only in the dreamer's brain, they despise the female who does not possess it, and esteem the character guided by its influence.

Augusta drew near the scene of confusion, and found her friend's neat wire library overturned, and the books suffering damage by the boisterous search of Arabella Sykes, after some Freethinker's pamphlet she had seen there, and of which she was loudly shouting forth the praise.

"I wonder, Frances," said Augusta, upon seeing her peaceful, gentle friend's ruffled countenance, "I am astonished you admit

admit the visits of that mad-headed, would-be pupil of Reason ; positively she is a disgrace to the female character."

" Not quite so bad as that, Augusta ; she is a very sensible girl, but a little too noisy and rude certainly," replied Frances, as her books began to be collected from the floor.

Augusta now took her leave, and, accompanied by Edwin Heathfield, walked home ; but not before she had promised captain Raybright to read with attention the famous work of which so much had that evening been said, who was anxious to discover the effect on such a mind, produced by reading a volume which had created a sensation throughout Europe.

Edwin too felt some anxiety, but forbore to say so ; and Augusta retired to her pillow, followed by shadows, doubts, and imaginations, that neither of them suspected, and such as were heretofore strangers to her bosom.

CHAPTER VII.  
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“ Full well she knew to scatter virtue’s seed,  
In fair proportion o’er the youthful heart ;  
To pluck betimes rank vice’s poisoned weed,  
That soon with deepening root would mock her art ;  
To act the Mentor and companion’s part ;  
To lure to knowledge while she seemed to play,  
And grave Instruction’s formal looks apart ;  
To teach the youth to walk in Wisdom’s way,  
Which she would fondly paint in hues of opening day.”

AUGUSTA’s dreams did in some degree partake of her evening’s new and unsubstantial fare ; but a fine morning, active employ, and fresh air, chased the phantoms from her brain, and presented her at the breakfast-table in all the freshness, bloom, and vivacity of youth.

“ You were late last night, my love,” said St. Orme, as Augusta presented him his morning beverage ; “ and your poor mother

mother was sadly annoyed with the children—her nerves are so dreadfully shaken, every thing is too much for her, and I don't know how it is, but when you are absent, there is ten times more noise and confusion with the little folks than when you are at home."

"I am afraid Susy does not try to manage the children when I am away," replied Augusta, "because she will not be left; they are very good little creatures, but she pets Gordon to his ruin—scolds Miriam, who, poor little soul, is certainly fretful—and, in her great love for Edward, she teases him dreadfully.—As to you, Robert," addressing a fine fair boy, who sat opposite, "you keep tolerably clear, I think."

"Oh yes, sister, I don't mind her at all; and when Edward is at home, he would not quarrel with her, only she will mimic him, and call him by odd names, to ridicule his rough blunt manners, and that

makes Edward mad, and so it does me sometimes."

"But Edward is at school, so he could have no part in last night's uproar," said the father.

"Oh no indeed ; but I suppose we were all in fault. Gordon cried without ceasing—do all we could, he would not be pleased; Miriam was vexed because he would not let her learn her lessons—and then she did not choose to go to bed, and so we all got into trouble, somehow or other."

"You see, Augusta, they all require you at home."

"So it appears, indeed, papa ; but I hope *you* do not require that I should always be in the nursery : it is true that I have hitherto almost lived there when not employed in other domestic affairs ; but now the youngest child is four years old, and my peculiar charge, Miriam, almost eight, I may venture to withdraw of an evening surely."

"I do not wish you, my love," replied  
her

her father, kindly, “to fag as you have done ; but your mother’s state of health renders it an incumbent duty on you to do all you can. Miriam shall go to school soon—you had better make inquiries for a good school for her ; Gordon will do better without her no doubt ; Robert too will soon be old enough to go out to school.”

Augusta felt her bosom swell ; there was that in her father’s last speech which touched her to the quick ; her proud spirit resented the word *duty*.—“ If I had only done my *duty*,” thought she ; then again schools, at this early age ; *she* could never be spared, or the money could not—but no matter. She shook back her flowing hair, and with a smile entreated her father not to think of sending the children from home, at least for another year.—“ I can,” continued she, “ do very well with them for that time, and three of them out will be a frightful expence. Miriam would break her heart away from me, and Robert is no trouble : but, papa, I want to

tell you who I saw last night, and what kept me so late."

Here followed an animated description of the party assembled at Frances Seymour's, in which every character was touched off with the hand of a master; the colours often a little too vivid perhaps, with a shade of the sarcastic that required softening: but St. Orme enjoyed her lively representations, her quick sense of the ridiculous, and her keen spirited observation, displaying at once shrewdness and intelligence. It formed a part of his own character, and he loved to see it in his laughing girl: hence a playful—“Hush! hush!” was the only check her extravagant mimicry ever received, until at seventeen she was in danger of becoming an object of terror by the free use of a talent, which without due restriction may astonish and amuse by its brilliance, but will at the same time affright by its mischief. She placed the reverend Henry in an irresistibly ridiculous point of view,

but

but touched lightly on his principles, feeling they reflected discredit on a sacred body of men, already not held in the highest respect by her father; the captain's brilliant eyes and brilliant talents were painted with a sunbeam, and poor Arabella Sykes most mercilessly used. The book in question was next named, and Augusta inquired if St. Orme had seen it.

"Not I," replied he, carelessly; "the press is glutted with trash at present, and this is some of it no doubt."

"It must be something better than trash, I suppose," returned Augusta, "for it has been read and talked of all through Europe; however, I have promised to read it, and you shall have my judgment on the matter, after a fair perusal."

"Better not waste your time on such infidel trumpery, as I have no kind of doubt it is," resumed St. Orme. "I have never heard of the book, but from the company you got it from, I feel certain it is some infidel publication."

"I do not think so, papa, indeed," said Augusta, in a deprecating tone; "that it contains some new notions and ideas no female life I am aware, but have no reason to think it contains the principles, if principles they may be called, of infidelity."

"Well, do as you please," returned her father, rising; "we have lingered a long time over this table; and your mother, I think, must want you."

"No, dear papa, I gave mamma her breakfast before we took ours, and she said she would try to sleep a couple of hours."

So saying, Augusta took Miriam and Robert by the hands, and led them to a small room adjoining her own chamber, which she had lately used as a sort of school-room for them, and having spent some time there, she seated them with books and slates, and then repaired to her mother's room.

It was part of Augusta's daily duty to take

take her mother's breakfast to her bedside, and coax and sooth that sickly parent until she partook of it, and afterwards to return and assist her in rising and dressing ; nor was it the most pleasant part of her duty, since to please or do right seemed impossible ; the irritable state of poor Anna's nerves, and the increasing debility of her general state, rendered her a most difficult subject to wait upon ; but Augusta felt it was her duty, not only to bear and forbear, but to strain every faculty of pleasing, amusing, or aiding ; and had her task been ten times more difficult to perform than it was, still would she have pursued her arduous path of duty, without a murmur, or any expression of disgust or weariness ; for with Augusta, to know her duty, was to perform it sacredly—the slightest part omitted, or but ill performed, would have inflicted on her correct mind a pain almost too severe to be borne. Hence, what appeared to her in the sacred light of a moral or religious duty, no persuasion

or temptation would lead her to infringe; nor would any inducement be sufficient to make her do any thing, however trivial, that her conscience or reason told her was wrong; nor could she readily pardon a deviation from this straight path in others. It was this high sense of moral rectitude, and her undeviating walk in the line of duty, that preserved Augusta from innumerable evils her independent free spirit would otherwise have led her into; standing as she did almost alone, without confidant, counsellor, or adviser, who was either willing or able to guide her eager footsteps in the pursuit of knowledge, just now passing the threshold of life. But the same unerring hand that in after life almost visibly conducted her through the deep, and supported her against the swelling waves of afflictions, was Augusta's unseen guide in life's opening page.

In the solitude of her own chamber, after the family had retired, and before they rose in the morning, with burning cheeks

cheeks that blushed at their own reflection in the opposite mirror—with feelings of disgust, that frequently amounted to horror, and with sick shudderings at the recollection that such base indelicate absurdities should find advocates, Augusta perused Mary Wolstoncroft's famous *Rights of Woman*; but it was not in such a writing that Augusta's bane was hid—it was too coarse, too free and unmasked; and casting it from her with a blush of shame that her eyes had ever met such indecencies, she sickened at the idea that the author was a woman—a woman disgracing her sex by a life in consonance with her writings; and determined that, unless inquired of, she would never name the unseemly subject, or acknowledge that her time had been so sacrificed. With this determination the book was returned to captain Raybright, with Miss St. Orme's compliments; and her favourite studies again returned to with added zest.

It has been before observed, that among

Augusta's friends were several French refugees; Augusta had cultivated the acquaintance because she thought it productive of mutual benefit—she had been enabled to render two ladies in particular very essential service, by procuring valuable customers for the elegant little trifles their ingenuity taught them to manufacture; in return, Augusta improved her French, gained much information on subjects connected with the revolution, learnt several elegant little fancy works, and obtained the loan of much French literature, which not being understood by her parents, was devoured rather than read in secret. The bland sophisms, and refined infidelity of Rousseau and Voltaire, were not detected by her; while the elegance of the language, the plausibility of the argument, and the harmony prevailing through the imagery, fascinated her taste and charmed her sense.

Under these roses and lilies was hidden a subtle poison, that imperceptibly began  
to

to creep through the young veins of Augusta, a thousand times more dangerous to her peace of mind and purity of principle than all the atheistical and seditious writers of her own language collected; for though Augusta spoke French with tolerable fluency, and read it with perfect ease, yet she was not sufficiently mistress of the language to detect those innuendoes and hidden meanings which in her native tongue could not have escaped her quick penetration, and which tended to debase the mind and sap the foundations of religion, honour, and virtue; and here lay Augusta's danger—she had tasted the poisoned chalice, and found it delicious; but the draught was not deep, and her guardian angel was still watching over to protect her.

Among Mrs. St. Orme's particular friends was a captain and Mrs. Boyer—the captain had been bred in a camp, inured to "feats of war, and deeds of arms," was a plain rough soldier, who preferred a camp and its

its accompaniments to a palace and down bed ; and as, during the long reign of George the Third, no one need sigh in vain for “ glittering arms and battle’s din,” there the greatest part of his life had been spent ; but during the few brief years between the close of the American and commencement of the French war, captain, then lieutenant Boyer, having nothing else to do, fell in love, and married an amiable portionless young lady, one of seven sisters, whose dower, person and mind alone, procured them all good husbands. After her marriage, Mrs. Boyer, with her husband, came to reside in the town where Mr. St. Orme and his family lived ; accident soon brought them acquainted with each other, and acquaintance soon ripened into friendship. Mrs. Boyer became warmly attached to the young Augusta, and interested in all that concerned her ; and Augusta returned her affection with all the warmth of her generous ardent nature : but the breaking out

of

of the French revolution removed this valuable friend from the vicinity of the St. Ormes; the army were called together, lieutenant Boyer was promoted to the head of a company, and with his wife lived at or near the various barracks at which his regiment was stationed for several years, during which an occasional letter, breathing kindness and affection, was all Anna or her family heard of them; but now that war raged furiously, the face of affairs was altered—captain Boyer was called into actual service; and his wife, full of pious resignation to the decrees of an all-wise Director, feeling certain she and her loved husband were in the direct path Providence had allotted for them, and placing implicit reliance on the protection of that Providence, saw her soldier depart to meet a foreign enemy, and then turned her own footsteps towards those friends who still held a tender place in her affections.

It had for some time been the regular practice

practice of Augusta to spend the two hours between dinner and tea in studious reading or writing : her mother, unable to sit up the whole day, always reclined on a sofa during that part of it, and required to be left alone. St. Orme was either engaged in writing and business, or nodded in his chair ; the very children and servants for those two hours preserved an unbroken stillness and quietude ; for mamma was trying to sleep. Augusta being thus left at liberty, if no visit of charity immediately called her from home, withdrew to her own room, and spent the time in close attention to some author or study, her buoyant spirits and light simple dinner triumphing over heat, drowsiness, or cold. She had just finished a volume of Rousseau's *Emilius*, and laying it aside, was busily engaged in writing some remarks on the work in French, in order the more fully to impress it on her memory, when a servant quietly opening the door, told

told her there was a lady below who desired to see her.

"Who is it, Mary?" asked Augusta, vexed at being so unseasonably disturbed.

"I don't know, Miss, indeed; a lady I never saw before, and yet she seems to know the family very well, for she inquired for every one separately, and spoke low like, as though she knowed, Miss, that your mamma was but poorly."

"Very well, Mary," returned her young mistress; "it must be some intimate friend of the family to call at this strange hour, only your memory is playing you false. Go, and say I will come down directly."

Mary disappeared; and Augusta finished the sentence she had before commenced, replaced her books and writing materials, and washed an ink spot from her finger; then drawing on her gloves, walked leisurely down, fully expecting to meet one of the many sectarian friends who were in the habit of coming at that hour, and, as she thought, destroying her time and her mother's

mother's tea. What then was her surprise, her delight, on entering the room, to meet that face and form so fondly remembered, so often dwelt upon in memory, so loved, so valued ! In one moment she clasped the astonished Mrs. Boyer to her breast, and imprinted a thousand kisses on her pale, calm cheek.

" I can scarcely fancy," said Mrs. Boyer, when at last she could speak, " that in the tall, graceful figure before me, I see the playful rosy Augusta I left five years since. I expected to find you grown, but did not calculate on meeting an elegantly-finished young woman in my old plaything."

Augusta, who saw no kind of alteration in her friend, only that she was rather paler, and was insensible of the change in her own person, felt grieved, as, with tears in her eyes, she exclaimed—" Ah, dear Mrs. Boyer, you are disappointed in me; you forget that five years would rob me  
of

of my childhood, and make a great girl of your favourite Augusta."

"I forget nothing, my love, but what I might well have known, that five years would make a greater difference in you than in myself—that in you it would be all improvement, while with me youth would be passing away," replied Mrs. Boyer, fondly kissing her cheek.

"You will find us all changed in person," rejoined Augusta; "but in heart I think much the same; poor mamma is sadly delicate; papa grows younger and handsomer; and little Miriam —— But you must see them all, and judge for yourself."

"I long to see your dear mamma; we have both suffered much since last we met; but our sufferings came from a Divine hand, and I trust have been sanctified and made useful to both," said Mrs. Boyer, in the calm voice of religious submission.

"We shall all be better for your coming

ing among us," cried Augusta, with enthusiasm; "but I hope particularly to benefit by it. Oh, I so want some one who has leisure, kindness, and judgment sufficient to correct my faults, and regulate this head of mine, that now often reminds me of a room filled with various heterogeneous articles, some good, some bad, pushed in without order or arrangement."

"It is a dear beautiful head in its exterior," returned her friend, smiling, "and its redundant locks, which I left flowing over those graceful shoulders, arranged with sufficient care; indeed, Augusta, the school you so much longed for, could not have improved your appearance or manner; but I fancy you have much intrusted to your care, the whole five talents are yours—see, my love, that you make them ten."

"Not the whole five," replied Augusta, sportively, "for I have a plentiful scarcity of money and leisure; and I believe those were two of them; but hark! that is mamma's

mamma's bell. Excuse me five minutes; I always answer her summons, and it will alarm her if any one else does it." So saying, Augusta flew to her mother, leaving Mrs. Boyer astonished at the rapid alteration five years had made in her.

Mrs. Boyer at this time was not more than thirty years of age, and still possessed a very considerable share of beauty, and even youthful vivacity; but the latter was considerably checked by the deep seriousness with which her strict sense of religion impressed her mind, and tinctured her conversation.

From her earliest days Mrs. Boyer had been sensibly alive to the value and beauty of religion; she had made it her study, and walked in its peaceful paths; but her piety was rather the result of amiable disposition and religious habits, than the fruit of a regenerate heart, until about two years previous to her introduction on these pages, when heavy affliction and great outward trouble led her to seek that consolation

solation in religion which at such a time can be derived from no other source; it was now for the first time she might truly be said to pray—now that for the first time she carefully examined her own heart, and found it to be a nest of unclean birds; with her eyes thus opened to a sense of her own state by nature, she read the sacred Scriptures with tears and prayers, eagerly seeking in them “the way, the life, and the truth.”

But still not satisfied, not at rest, she sought for direction and assistance from a clergyman, differing in some degree from his more orthodox brethren, but holding sacred all the doctrines and principles of the established church; his sermons were preached extempore—his prayers flowed from the heart to the lip—and his audience was composed of those among whom “not many rich, not many mighty,” could be numbered. Among “the great ones of the earth” he was scarcely known; but he fed the hungry, clothed the

the naked, and visited the sick—wept with those who were in affliction, and rejoiced with those that were glad—laboured to reclaim the hardened sinner, and raised the drooping penitent with the words of life and truth, and enjoyed, as his own rich reward, that “ peace which passeth all understanding ;”—“ the soul’s calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy,” which God bestows on those who do his will on earth.

By him Mrs. Boyer was directed to that Great Fountain opened for sinners, where they may “ wash and be clean ;” she was instructed to go with faith to him who cries—“ Come unto me, all ye that are wearied and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” She was weary—she was heavy laden, and she found rest; her troubled spirit was at peace: her agitated mind, no longer tossed or distracted, had found its desired object; and if some little peculiarities mingled with her creed, still it taught the religion of hope, of faith, and of deep humility—the self-denying, self-abasing

abasing doctrines of Christ, and was therefore the creed of true Christianity.

It was thus, in a manner new created, that Mrs. Boyer returned to her friends—those friends who seeing themselves the necessity there exists of a regeneration of the heart, rejoiced to find that one so dear to them had sought and found that pearl of great price; and Augusta, who loved religion for religion's sake, listened to the affecting account Mrs. Boyer gave them of her ministerial friend's long sickness, pious submission to his Master's afflicting rod, and peaceful, holy death, with tears of far more tender interest than any her late readings had drawn from her bright eyes, though they had lured her of many.—“Ah,” cried she, “how I regret he did not live to see the reward of his labours, in the conversion of his little flock!”

“He did, my dear,” replied her friend.

“Yes; and he reaps the fruit of all his toil;  
He sow'd the seed, and God has blest the soil;

He

He saw the wicked man forsake his ways,  
The scoffing tongue that learnt to perfect praise;  
The drunkard quit his revelry and strife,  
And meekly listen to the words of life;  
The noisy village, wanton and profane,  
Grow neat and decent, peace and order reign.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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As by weighing a guinea in water we prove whether it be really gold, so by weighing our own faculties and attainments by those of the world in general, we may ascertain their real worth; whatever bulk they have gained by the swelling of vanity, so much will they lose on the trial.

SMITH.

"AH, my dear Augusta, how delighted I am to see you among us once again!" exclaimed Frances Seymour, as her friend entered that young lady's drawing-room, and found it filled with the literati and talent of the day. "Positively, my dear, you are become a perfect stranger of late; I can never see you but at home, and then so much occupied, that one almost feels trespassing on your time. Mrs. Boyer I fancy, Augusta, engrosses every spare moment?"

"Not

"Not a word more; Miss St. Orme is here, and let us enjoy the present hour, without inquiring who enjoyed the past," cried captain Raybright, pressing forward to greet Augusta with the affectionate freedom of an old friend.

"I too have been expiring with impatience to see you, my dear Miss St. Orme," drawled the reverend Henry Glossit. "I have just received a new publication from my bookseller, who has orders to send me every thing that comes out worth reading: it is an exquisite production, and I must positively get you to read it; you will be delighted, there is so much brilliance—such an abundance of new ideas in it."

"Who is your author, sir?—and what is the work entitled?" asked Augusta with a smile.

"The author is, as indeed in the present day you may suppose, anonymous—known only to his friends; I can however give a pretty shrewd guess. But you

must read the work, Miss St. Orme—you *must indeed*: apropos, I have never yet heard your opinion of the luminous volume you last promised me to read; did you not get much new light there?"

"I did indeed," returned Augusta, with a smile of sarcastic severity; "but it partook so strongly of the heated sulphurous fumes which produced it, that I felt choked with its pestiferous odour, and annoyed with the quivering uncertainty of its ignis fatuus flames."

"But did you read the whole of it, Miss St. Orme?"

"Oh yes, every word; though I almost blush to own it, even to you, who, I sincerely hope, are the only clergyman in the kingdom who would patronize such an indecent publication: but perhaps you have only done so by way of a quiz; indeed it must be so; you would not soil your profession and your gown by avowing such sentiments in any other way;" so saying, Augusta turned away, before he had

had time to commence a soft smiling sort of apology for daring to differ in opinion, which he had composed during her speech.

When Augusta first entered the room, a party was forming for the benefit concert of a favourite vocal performer, personally known to several of the circle; she was now entreated to join the number, and tickets pressed upon her by the friends of the vocalist. Augusta readily agreed to join the party; and her old friend, Mr. Seymour, coming into the room at that moment, she cheerfully accepted a ticket from him, and by so doing escaped giving offence to the liberal cousins, who were both eager in their offers.—“And now,” lisped Frances, “we have another little plan, in which we wish you to join, Augusta; Mrs. Boyer I know will oppose us, so now I shall see whose influence is the stronger, hers or mine; I am sure you have known me longer and better.”

“Are you jealous, Frances,” asked Augusta, with an arch smile, “that Mrs. Boyer gives such offence? But come,

speak out—say what is this mighty trial of strength in which you pay the compliment of considering me as a mere puppet, played by the rival wires of mesdames Seymour and Boyer."

A loud laugh from several of the little circle almost disconcerted the half-offended Frances, who, however, collecting herself, congratulated them on their subject of mirth, adding—"Whoever thinks you a puppet, mistakes the matter; but in the present case I still fear the influence of *some folks*. The fact is, that the theatre opens on Tuesday, with Kotzebue's play of Pizarro, in which a new performer is to appear, whom we wish to succeed, and I have set my heart on your going; we shall form a large party, but it will be incomplete without you; besides, your approval will be of consequence."

"But why," asked captain Raybright, "all this doubt and fear of influence? Miss St. Orme I am sure has too much good taste not to enjoy one of the finest plays ever written when well acted, and too much good

good sense and good-nature not to oblige her friends by joining their party."

"And clapping your actor whether she likes him or not, hey, captain?"

"Oh dear no; speak of him as you think, or in any way, only speak, for I know you will go."

"It is more than I know then, captain."

"Nay, do go, Augusta," resumed Miss Seymour. "But the truth is, Mr. and Mrs. St. Orme, though the best people in the world, have peculiar religious notions, which forbid every kind of amusement; and Augusta is so much accustomed to submit to their prejudices, that I very much doubt if she has strength of mind sufficient to assert her own independence, and go in opposition to anger and to Mrs. Boyer."

"Oh, the baby is yet in leading-strings is she! Why, the deuce take it, you are old enough and tall enough to throw them away!" shouted Arabella Sykes, who just then made her appearance.

stay

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"Are

"Are you to be of this party, Miss Sykes?" asked Augusta calmly, though every feeling was at war.

"Not I faith! I am going to ride a race that evening with Dareall," replied she.

"I am glad to hear it," returned Augusta with hauteur, "or I should have proved my independence by declining to be of it, without consulting the prejudice of parents, or the influence of friends."

Arabella's bold black eye sunk; she turned on her heel, and humming an opera tune, walked away, while the subject was again resumed by the captain.

"Whatever strength of mind I may possess," said Augusta in reply, with a lofty smile of equivocal meaning, "it will not on this occasion be called into action. I am certainly accustomed to submit to what I consider the pure principles of religion, which guide my highly-respectable parents, and should feel deeply humbled by exerting an independence in opposition to them; but, in the present case, I anticipate

pate no kind of opposition, for where good sense and kindness have their seats, prejudice can never enter; you may therefore reckon on me as adding one to your number."

Never had Frances Seymour felt so humbled, or sunk to such insignificance before. It was well known to all the circle that the peculiar tenets of religious faith professed by both fathers was the same. In speaking of the parents of her friend, Frances had displayed a littleness of mind, on which the lofty Augusta looked down with contempt, that made itself felt even through the thick coating of self-love with which Frances was cased.

" You are angry with me, Augusta," said Frances, as she followed her out of the room.

" Oh no ; I am not so unmerciful. You have enough to bear to-night. You are angry with yourself, and no reproach is so heavy as self-reproach. Farewell!" replied Augusta half seriously, as she took the

hand of her sister Miriam, and disappeared; and she was quite right.

Frances, who was unusually solicitous to please the two cousins, felt as though she would have given half her life to gain the unqualified applause which on her return to the company she heard bestowed by both on the candid, high-principled conduct, the noble mind, and undaunted rectitude of Augusta. Neither the *liberal* sentiments of the enlightened Miss Sykes, the sophistical pretty arguments of Miss Seymour, or the covert infidelity of half a dozen literati, could shake Augusta from the high place she had gained with the rational part of the company.—“After all,” cried the clergyman, “these liberal ladies are only fit to talk to and be talked of; but, for a wife, Miss St. Orme is the person. As well attempt to turn the sun from its sphere, as that girl from the path of virtue. There a man may repose his dearest interests with safety—his soul may there rest secure.”

Frances

Frances was not particularly quick in observing the feelings of others, or sensitive in her own; but there was something either in the matter or manner of Mr. Glossit, that for the moment put her out of conceit with Wolstoncroft, Godwin, and Arabella Sykes, and half determined her to be as bold in the cause of virtue and prejudice as Augusta herself; but their minds were differently constituted, and their paths in life doomed to differ as widely.

It was late in the following day, while Augusta was industriously plying her needle in the manufacture of a frock for Miriam, who sat by the sofa, on which her mother reclined, engaged by turns with her doll, and the story-book her cousin Robert read to her, when a loud knock at the door announced visitors, and Anna Heathfield and the reverend Mr. Glossit were announced.

"Well, my dear Mrs. St. Orme," cried the lively Anna, "I hope you have not

taken tea, for I came on purpose to take it with you, and to introduce to you this gentleman, who having met Augusta at the Seymours', was very desirous of seeing you all at home."

Mrs. St. Orme politely acknowledged the introduction, and with a friendliness all her own, said she was at all times most happy to receive any friend or acquaintance of her Augusta's, who would visit them without ceremony or parade, both of which the wretched state of her health and nerves forbid.

"But nothing in the world prevents your being the most kind-hearted, dearest soul in the creation; and if this reverend gentleman does not say so too, it will be because he has no taste for the domestic and the good," cried Anna, with affectionate playfulness.

"You are a dear saucy girl," returned her friend, who had answered for her at the baptismal font, given her her own name,

name, and loved her only inferior to her own children.

“ But perhaps Mr. Glossit may be of a different opinion. The size of our family, and many other circumstances, prevent our giving Augusta her own reception-rooms, and those indulgences which Mr. Seymour bestows on an only child.”

Mr. Glossit bowed, smiled, and uttered some complimentary phrases in a soft tone, as Augusta exclaimed, with grateful animation—“ Dear mamma, pray do not attempt an apology for not banishing me from the dear society of my family; *chaque une à son goût*, but I would not for the world be condemned to separate apartments; so now let me assist you into the drawing-room, while Anna explains how an intimacy, which I did not know existed, sprung up between Mr. Glossit and herself.”

Mr. Glossit would himself have explained, had not his every faculty been en-chained as he watched Augusta, with the tenderness

tenderness due to infancy, raise her invalid parent from the sofa, and support her faltering steps to the next room, where the tea equipage awaited them.

"I am not always so bad as this," said Mrs. St. Orme, as her sparkling eyes turned from the attentive Augusta to Mr. Glos-sit; "a touch of—I know not what—sciatica, they tell me it is, quite disables me from walking, and adds considerably to Augusta's many occupations; but she is active, and I trust happy in the discharge of her duty.—But who have we coming? there is another knock at the door."

"Very possibly Edwin; he is always glad of an excuse to come here," said Anna as the door opened, and Edwin Heathfield and captain Raybright were announced. Mr. St. Orme came in at the same time, and mutual introductions and acknowledgments took place.

"I don't know how you will approve of our bringing the church and army upon you this way, my dear Mrs. St. Orme," said

Edwin

Edwin laughing ; "but the fact is, that Glossit coaxed Anna into a promise to bring him on this the second day of their acquaintance, and the captain commanded me to do the same, and I, as in duty bound, have obeyed."

Both Mr. and Mrs. St. Orme were polite and friendly ; the children, who remained in the drawing-room, were handsome, well behaved, and lively ; the tea was good, and served with elegance ; the presiding genius of the room was all attention, animation, and good-nature ; a feeling of pleasure and comfort diffused itself around, and time flew on downy pinions. St. Orme found captain Raybright a man of general information, who had travelled much, and profited by what he had seen ; many of his ideas struck him as new and brilliant ; their solidity he could not then determine, especially as Raybright, with the tact of an experienced man of the world, touched but lightly on those points he felt opposed to the somewhat rigid views of

St. Orme.

St. Orme. With the circumstances that then agitated all Europe he was fully acquainted, and spoke of them with clearness and precision, drawing from the well-stored mind of St. Orme his views and opinions, with which, if he could not coincide, he yet so managed as not to oppose, but throwing them into another point of light, cast a shade, or brilliance around them, as best suited his argument, and left St. Orme nothing to regret but the rapidity with which time flew.

Edwin Heathfield played with the children, until, wearied with enjoyment, they were dismissed to their beds, and Mr. Glossit devoted himself to Mrs. St. Orme and her daughter.

Augusta possessed naturally a very fine voice and correct ear, and sung her native ballads with taste and sweetness; she would likewise sing many of Handel's sacred pieces, accompanied by Anna and Edwin Heathfield; the latter of whom played the flute and double bass with science and execution: but of science Augusta knew very little.

little. Among her early longings, a music-master held a very prominent situation; she however never obtained one, and the little acquaintance she had with the scientific part of music, was gleaned from the professional people who often formed part of Frances Seymour's parties and concerts, and the instructions it was in Edwin Heathfield's power to give her and his sister. Still however Augusta sung, and sung with pleasure to herself and hearers, free from fear or restraint.—“Mine,” she would say, “are untutored notes, the gift of nature alone; such as they are you have them; but, for science, Mara and Billington will give you that—I have none of it.”

“Will you go to Mara's concert, Augusta?” asked Edwin, as amusements were spoken of.

“I think I shall,” replied she.

“Then remember, I have tickets for you and Anna.”

“Thank you, but that matter is settled;  
I have

I have promised to go with Frances Seymour and a large party. You will perhaps join us; I shall be most happy if you will, for all Frances's friends are not mine."

"I should think not indeed; we will therefore do our best to make you happy, and in return, you must favour us with a song this evening; for I declare I like your singing better than Mara's."

"So do I, Edwin," said Mrs. St. Orme; "Augusta always wanted to learn singing, but I know not for what reason; I am sure there are very few who sing better."

Augusta laughingly thanked her mother—"But," said she, turning to Glossit, "you would vote songs sung without science, or even the accompaniment of an instrument, a bore—a nuisance; would you not?"

"Allow me to correct you, my dear Miss St. Orme. I am not a musical amateur, nor an admirer of scientific performance; the sweet warblings of native melody have a thousand

a thousand times more charms for me," replied Mr. Glossit.

Augusta doubted his sincerity; for she had before heard him declare differently; however, she no longer hesitated, and songs, duets, and trios followed.

Captain Raybright unconsciously ceased speaking to listen, and St. Orme, who doted on his daughter's singing, ceased also; by degrees, they both drew nearer, and listened with profound attention, until at the close of the sweet duet, "Oh, sing, sweet bird!" Augusta raised her eyes, and met those of the clergyman, fixed on her with an expression impossible to be misunderstood, even by a novice, and which put a period to Augusta's singing for that evening; but conversation did not languish, and it was with an exclamation of unfeigned surprise, that an expression of fatigue passing over Mrs. St. Orme's pallid countenance, inducing captain Raybright to cast his eyes towards a small French clock, that stood on the chimney cap,

cap, he discovered that the hour of midnight was passed.

"It is always so," said Anna Heathfield; "papa, who has himself often experienced the effects of the St. Orme atmosphere, never expects we can escape early; so he sends all the family to bed, and quietly takes his segar and his book until we return."

"Fie, fie, Anna! you would make it appear that we are sadly dissipated, or your family wonderfully quiet and regular," cried St. Orme, as he wrapped her large shawl around her, and bid her good night, with the care and fondness of a father.

The cousins declared, and for once spoke sincerely, they had not spent an evening so every way delightful since coming into the west of England, and both received a cordial invitation to renew their visits—an invitation by no means neglected, for from this time there was seldom a day passed in which one or both of the cousins did not

not hover round Augusta; she met them in her walks, in her garden, and in her church—wherever she called, there one of them was sure to be. In her visits of charity or mercy, she not unfrequently was surprised by finding they had traced her steps, and supplied what her scanty purse refused the means of doing. She was supplied with every new publication, whether prose or poetry, the children with toys and *bon-bons*, and her mother with a hundred little whims and delicacies.

The concert and the play both passed off with a few severe remarks on folly, extravagance, and fiddling fellows, from St. Orme, and some serious observations on the shortness of man's probationary state, the necessity of preparing in this life for life everlasting, the injunctions to be separate from the world, to come out from among them, from Mrs. Boyer.

To her father's caustic observations, made chiefly, if not entirely, after the amusement was partaken of, Augusta was either

either haughtily silent, or proudly indignant; once, and once only, she noticed it by saying—" If you had expressed your disapprobation previous to my going, papa, you are conscious I should, with perfect cheerfulness, have declined; but, on the contrary, you heard it named, and saw me go, without a dissenting word."

" I knew, if I said a word against it, there would be nothing but sulky looks and crossness; you knew my will, and ought to have done it, without bringing a parcel of strangers here to oppose me," replied her father in a tone of severity.

To an attack so coarse, and so unjust, Augusta could not, would not, attempt to reply; but hastily collecting her work, she quitted the room, to give her bursting heart relief in solitude. To all Mrs. Boyer said she was most attentive and amenable.—" If," said she, at the end of a long conversation, " if I saw the matter in the light you appear to, nothing should tempt me to enter on such forbidden ground—

ground—if, for an instant, I could conceive it my duty to sacrifice all the pleasure, and the prospects of pleasure, life presents me, I would do it immediately, and without a murmur; the right arm should be lopped, the right eye plucked out, unhesitatingly; but if, on the contrary, it appears to me the duty of a rational being, under my rather peculiar circumstances, to seize every means of happiness within my reach, to enjoy to the utmost, every sunbeam that crosses the cloudy horoscope of my life, ought I not then to do so? and if, this enjoyment be sinful, can I open my own eyes to it? must it not rest with him in whose hands are the hearts of all mankind, to shew me that I am wrong, and direct me to a better road?"

"It certainly must, my love, and there for the present we will leave it; you have too much goodness about you not eventually to find the true and only path to happiness, the true light that will illuminate

minate your cloudy horoscope with the bright beams of heaven," replied Mrs. Boyer, with mild and sweetly affectionate earnestness.

Augusta was sensibly alive to every species of rational enjoyment, particularly to the drama, and the difficulty she found in gratifying her taste served but the more to excite it; yet she would have yielded to her friend's remonstrance, and practised the sort of enforced self-denial now become almost habitual, though still galling to her proud spirit, and decline partaking the forbidden fruit, had not the ill-timed remarks of Frances Seymour roused every particle of independence and self-action in her, and determined her, unless absolutely prohibited, to enjoy to the utmost the gratification promised her.

On both those occasions, as well as on several others, Edwin Heathfield, never far from Augusta, whispered—"Do you recollect what I said the first evening we ever saw yon rich parson?"

Augusta

Augusta laughed a reply; yet it became almost impossible to mistake, or remain blind to, the state of the poor man's heart, or, as Augusta said, "his fancy;" and it was in the fulness of a heart satisfied that such a man could never win the pure mind of Augusta, that Edwin could trifle with a subject dearer to him than he was even himself aware of; for he had dwelt on the graces, the beauties, and the virtues of Augusta, until she was become an integral part of himself, the very soul of his existence, and the unconscious guide of all his actions, tastes, and sentiments; how dear she was he knew not, though after days were doomed to prove to him how little the human heart knows its own strength, or can calculate on its own affections.

It was with feelings of almost pleasure that Augusta received a visit from captain Raybright, announcing an order to join his regiment immediately.—"Never, Miss St. Orme," said he, "shall I forget the

kindness, the worth, of this inestimable family; let me bear with me your esteem, for I feel I deserve it—you have made a convert of me in a thousand ways."

"What," cried Augusta, "shall I rival the erudite liberal Mary in your good opinion?"

"Not at all," returned he; "she is an author to admire, you are a being to adore; but my precarious profession, my limited narrow patrimony, forbids a hope—in short, dear Augusta, I love you too well to ask your participation of a soldier's lot, a soldier of fortune only; but I have a fond hope of seeing you fill a station of ease and wealth, and yet of saluting you as a relation."

The entrance of her mother saved Augusta the necessity of replying, and turned the channel of her thoughts; for the quick sight of Mrs. St. Orme had long since discovered that the captain was, with all his pleasing exterior, nothing short of an infidel: she had repeatedly talked to him closely

closely and faithfully, but as yet without effect. She now received his adieu with almost tears.—“ You are going,” said she, “ with your life in your hand, protected only by the God of battles, and that protection you disown and despise! bearing about you the godlike stamp of an immortal soul, you deny your immortality—are content to lie down with dogs, when you were created to reign with saints and angels! Oh, my dear young friend, shake off this mortal slumber from your soul—awake from this frightful mental madness—read the Bible with candid attention, and it will plead its own cause—ask, on your bended knees, to be taught the way, the life, and the truth, and you shall find it; He will shew it who hath explicitly said, ‘ *he that cometh unto me will I in no wise cast out.*’ We shall probably meet in this life no more, but I charge you meet me in the realms of bliss; for live beyond this life you must, either in bliss or misery eternal!”

A charge so sacred, from one that appeared scarcely a being of this nether sphere, and in whose bright eye shone the anticipation of that blissful eternity of which she spoke, could not be heard with indifference, especially in the softened mood captain Raybright then was ; he bent reverently over the fair hand presented him, pressed it to his lips with fervour, and softly uttering—“ Your pure prayers I know will go with me—farewell ! If there be a God, may he bless you, and teach me !”

He dropped a tear on the hand he held, hastily pressed that of Augusta to his yet quivering lips, and disappeared.

## CHAPTER IX.

— — — — — Youth no less becomes  
The light and careless livery that it wears,  
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,  
Importing health and graveness. SHAKESPEARE.

IT has before been observed that Augusta St. Orme was sensibly alive to the enjoyment of rational pleasures, and to her every thing became an enjoyment in which she could shake off restraint, or confer a benefit; hence her resources were numerous: a flower, a fly, an insect, a new book, or a walk in the country, afforded her inquiring mind, and joyous spirit, feelings of pure delight; and the blessing of the aged sufferer, or the lisping thanks of the infant she had fed, clothed, instructed, or comforted, filled her warm heart almost to bursting. At such times Au-

gusta would mentally exclaim—" Ah, who so blessed, who so happy as I am?"

But such excitements soon exhaust themselves, and the very same dispositions that could thus create enjoyments, could also, and frequently did, create her miseries: an unkind word, a chilling look, a doubt of the propriety of her conduct, a hint that she might exert her talents to more advantage, a direct contradiction, a rude refusal of some little indulgence, or a preference shewn to the judgment or opinions of those she felt to be decidedly her inferiors, were trials that constantly crossed her path; and the very intensity of her feelings, the ardency of her disposition, and the busy workings of her imagination, would frequently heighten them to miseries, and create a feeling of desolation and lowliness in her heart more difficult to be borne than the severest trouble would be to a more phlegmatic temperature.

Neither Mr. or Mrs. St. Orme were at all

all aware of the beauties, the defects, or the dangers of such a character. St. Orme could frequently see the faults of his daughter, and see them through a magnifier: at such times he never failed to point them out with an unsparing hand, following the subject up with a severe reprimand; but he never set himself patiently to work to eradicate those weeds of luxuriant growth which mingled with the flowers of her fine disposition; in fact, he knew not how, and frequently observed, that he knew no other way of teaching or of improving any one than by telling them of their faults and defects—a way of all others calculated to injure poor Augusta, who, ever amenable to the voice of kindness or affection, was stung almost to madness, or wrought up to a feeling of sovereign contempt, by the angry invective, the impatient reproof, or the impossibility of giving satisfaction, so often manifested.

Mrs. St. Orme was to the full as badly qualified

qualified for a preceptor to youth as her husband ; she loved Augusta, and acknowledged her to be a useful, active girl, and an excellent nurse. She was likewise proud of her appearance and her acquirements ; would, now that she was seventeen years of age, have her dress well and fashionably ; wished her to go into society, and was proud of the attention she attracted ; yet she would contradict her on the most trifling subjects, refuse her the most innocent gratification, and exact from her the most laborious attention to herself and the younger children, and abject deference to every whim or dogma of her father (and the very best of men are sometimes dogmatic), with the most unqualified submission to the wills of both, the slightest resistance to which was resented as a serious fault, and drew down many reminders of numerous indulgences, which, unfortunately, always came at the moment Augusta fancied herself less the object

object of indulgence than any other living creature.

Mrs. Boyer saw and deplored all this: she highly respected Mr. St. Orme and his affectionate wife; but she loved and pitied Augusta, whose pure mind she could read as a printed sheet: to her all the gulplings and heart-burnings of the high struggling, independent girl were clearly manifest; and when in an agony she threw herself on the sympathizing bosom of her friend, exclaiming—"Oh, my dear Mrs. Boyer, if my sense of duty would but let me leave this abode of trials, with how much credit and respectability could I obtain more than I get here, with one quarter the labour! and oh, what is better and dearer than all, give perfect satisfaction, and receive thanks!" the kind-hearted woman pressed her to her heart with a sister's fondness, as she replied—"But your duty, my love, binds you to home, and you too well know, and too well perform, your duties, to wish to infringe on them in this essential point;

in this our state of probation, it is necessary something should frequently remind us, that this is not our resting-place, our abiding city: depend on it, my sweet girl, that your heavenly Father sees it necessary to wean this heart of yours from its earthly devotions, to lower your idols to mere mortal beings, suffering under the penalty of sin, that you may be convinced perfection dwells in him alone, that you may find your comforts, your consolations, in him alone: these are trials of patience, and pride loves them not; but it is '*through much tribulation*' that we find our way to heaven; and there, Augusta, after being refined by divine grace, you and I shall at last find our sweet reward —our home of rest and peace."

"Ah, well!" rejoined Augusta, with a smile, and kissing the lips that thus kindly counselled—"ah, well! it is doubtless intended for my good; and I am but a fool rebelling against the hand of wisdom, to feel thus; and after all, who cares for my sufferings,

sufferings, or, beside yourself, who knows them? Why, nobody : my own unsubdued feelings cause my misery, and then I am misunderstood. Well, be it so; things will be better some day : it is not what we are, but what we appear, to purblind mortals : but there is one who reads the heart, and to him I leave my cause.— Now, Miriam, my dear, go and ask mamma if we may walk out for an hour or two. I will go and see blind Betty ; she frequently teaches me a lesson of gratitude and humility."

Mrs. Boyer had no children of her own, nor had she ever been much accustomed to them ; but the cheerfulness and sweetness of her disposition led her to prefer the society of young people, with whom she was a general favourite, and taught by an unerring teacher, she knew how to guide and direct them into the paths of peace—

" To act the mentor and companion's part ;  
To lure to knowledge, while she seemed to play,"

without the grave aspect and chilling air which some persons deem it necessary to put on when the follies or trifling of youth pass before their eyes, thus injudiciously giving to experience or wisdom the snaky head and chilling properties of a Medusa. Having soothed Augusta's agitated spirit, she went in quest of Mrs. St. Orme, promising to sit with her during Augusta's absence.

Permission being given, Augusta, with Miriam in her hand, whom she now made the companion of many of her charitable visits, in order to shew her both sides of the picture, and early convince her that poverty was not misery, nor riches happiness, bent her steps towards the humble abode of blind Betty. Miriam carried a small basket, containing some little comforts which poor Betty's narrow means denied, unless bestowed on her by the hand of benevolence.—“Do you know, sister,” said the little girl, “that when I went to walk yesterday with Miss Stonehead, who  
you

you know is so very rich, she gave me just such a little basket as this is to carry for her, and I thought we were going to some poor family with nice things; so I asked her who it was, and she did not understand me; only said—‘Lord, child, what nonsense!’ And now, sister, what do you think was in that basket?’

“Indeed I don’t know; but whatever it was, you are not to suppose from such a trifle that Miss Stonehead is not charitable.”

“No, sister; but I will tell you, and then you shall suppose: well, this basket was full of fine artificial flowers, made by herself, and we carried them to the repository, where they are to be sold.”

“Well, my dear, and the money arising from that sale will, you know, purchase many little comforts for the poor.”

“No such thing, Augusta,” returned the child, eagerly; “for when the woman gave her some money that other flowers had been sold for, Miss Stonehead thanked her

her so, and said—‘ I want all the money I can get, for I lose so much at cards, and mamma is so stingy, that I am horribly poor.’—Oh, how angry I was! and when we came out, I told her that my sister would think it very sinful to lose so much money at cards, while so many poor people wanted it; that neither mamma nor you, Augusta, would play at cards, because you think it wrong to lose your time and money.”

“ You should not have said any thing about your sister, my dear; Miss Stonehead is rich, and can afford to lose her money at cards, and yet give to the poor.”

“ I don’t think she does,” returned Miriam, stoutly; “ for she tossed her head, and said so proudly—‘ Such Methodist nonsense, child! the parish takes care of the poor; but if Miss St. Orme can afford to give to the poor, Miss Stonehead cannot:’ and I thought she should be called Stoneheart instead of Stonehead.”

The appearance of blind Betty’s little apartment

apartment put an end to Miriam's strictures, and Augusta inwardly determined to keep her out of the way of making such observations, for having her mind tainted by the hardness of the world for the future.

Betty was seated on a low chair by the fire, employed in putting a piece on her linen hood ; for though deprived of sight, the old woman was neither quite helpless, nor ever in rags.—“ Ah, my dear young lady,” cried she, pressing both Augusta’s hands in her withered, trembling grasp, “ I do dearly love to hear your happy voice, and dear little Miss’s too : how good of you, to come this cold day !”

“ Why, my poor Betty,” cried Miriam, “ you are putting a piece of check apron on your nice white cap ! You must never try to put pieces on your caps ; I will always put them on for you.”

The tears streamed from the aged sufferer’s sightless orbs, as she fervently uttered—“ God in mercy bless you, my sweet child,

child, and lead your heart to him who is the giver of all good things!"

"What had you for dinner to-day?" asked Augusta, who guessed that the old woman's early meal was already taken.

"Oh, Miss," replied she, cheerfully, "a nice bit of bread; and I toasted it, and put it in my little cup of water, and made a better dinner than many a faithful servant of my blessed Master made this day: however hard the times may be, I have always found the promise true—'your bread shall be given, and your water shall be sure.' Ought I not then to be thankful?"

"And this is poverty!" mentally sighed Augusta. "Ah, no, this is riches!—that true riches which will not make to itself wings and fly away!"

Miriam, seated on a low stool, was busily employed removing the check, and repairing the cap with proper materials, when Augusta, having improved the old woman's dinner from the contents of her basket, and placed the remainder within reach, took

took a small Bible from her pocket, and read such portions of its sacred contents as she thought most appropriate, or Betty suggested. Miriam had finished her self-imposed task, and was sitting with her eyes fixed on the placid, heavenly countenance of her aged friend, when a strong smell of fire arrested their attention. Augusta had for some time fancied it, but engaged in her sacred employ, was scarcely sensible to any external object. Miriam hastily arose, and pushing the old woman from where she sat, exclaimed—"Oh, Augusta dear, Betty's clothes are on fire!"

Augusta had already seen it, and promptly seizing the pillow from the bed, forcibly held the old woman in her chair while she stamped the pillow on the burning clothes, which, preventing a flame, soon extinguished the fire, and restored the little company to order.

It appeared that Betty, feeling cold, had trimmed her little fire, and drawn her chair close to it; by some means a hot cinder

der was wrapped in her gown, which being stuff, was a long while burning without blaze; but at last reached the linen folds of her apron, and but for the presence and activity of Augusta, the poor soul would probably have met with death in this dreadful manner.—“It is not,” said she, “the manner in which I should wish to finish my course; but if my master had so willed it, I trust he would have enabled me to leave my testimony clear even in the flames.”

Augusta presided at her father’s dinner-table that day with very different feelings from those which agitated her at the breakfast-table: yet Miriam’s animated relation of sister’s goodness, and sister’s cleverness, was heard with much less attention than the petted girl usually received, and the oft-repeated questions of “do you hear, papa?”—“do you know, mamma?” was answered by an almost stern “very well, child,” or a half-wearied “what an incessant tongue you have, Miriam!” But nothing

nothing could dislodge the happy inmate of Augusta's full heart: she did not talk much, nor was her smile gayer than usual; yet Mrs. Boyer, who dined with them, could easily perceive that all gloom was fled, and that the inmate of her bosom was now as radiant, as in the morning it had been gloomy.—“ Ah,” sighed she, “ my poor Augusta! that sensitive heart of yours will suffer much in its way through life—will bleed under a smiling exterior, and writhe under a face of calmness—will ache for sorrows not its own, and be made the sport of those who cannot appreciate its worth and high bearing: against such an enemy, one friend alone can support you; may you find him a friend near at hand!”

Augusta was summoned from the sanctuary of her closet to receive her friend, Anna Heathfield.—“ Take tea,” said she, “ to the small drawing-room, and see that the fire is good, for mamma will feel this chilly November evening severely.”

“ It is early, Augusta, to talk of November

vember evenings, and good fires," said Anna, coming forward to meet her friend: "what shall we do with January, if we talk of cold while the leaves are yet on the trees?—a little yellow to be sure, but there they are."

"Ay, indeed, but these very leaves remind me of the necessity of fire, closed doors, and rug mats," replied Augusta; "they are so like my poor mamma: but you are a happy girl, Anna, not to have learnt the lesson; at your house health always sits smiling and nodding kindly on you all: I sincerely wish the jolly dame would more frequently favour us with a visit; we would use her well and treat her kindly."

"She is capricious, Augusta, and bestows her favours something like her blind cousin, Fortune—not as we would always wish; but those cheeks of the York and Lancaster hue do not announce her unkindness: and now, Augusta, to business, for business it absolutely is, Lady Belmore,

more, I find, has offered you her matronly countenance, and a ticket for the charity ball to-morrow night; and in the overflowing kindness of her heart, has extended her gracious patronage to your friend Anna: now, what say you, or rather what does papa say—do we go? for unless you go, I am forbidden, though mamma wishes we may both enjoy an innocent amusement, the purpose of which is to aid an excellent institution; yet she thinks that in the Belmore blaze of beauty and fashion, I shall be overlooked, unless you are there to shed some few bright rays around me. So to the question—do we go, or is Edwin to hang in his garters for very grief at being disappointed of dancing with you?"

"A question, my dear Anna, not in my power to answer: lady Belmore made her polite proposal a week since to papa himself, who then appeared pleased with the attention; but whenever it has been named since, he has treated it as folly, or taken

no

no notice of it; I therefore know nothing of the matter: but Mrs. Heathfield must not allow me to keep you at home: we are, you know, so differently situated. If you prefer a more humble party, Frances Seymour will most certainly be there, and—”

“ And, nonsense,” interrupted the lively Anna; “ I go with you, or I go not at all; and so I shall tell papa St. Orme, and see if he can harden his heart sufficiently to suffuse my bright eyes in tears, and disappoint his graceful daughter of making her appearance in the train of the brilliant Belmore comet: depend on it, Augusta, if you had been a homely dowdy, we might both have remained at home, nursing little brothers and sisters, without any interference of her ladyship; for my being included is merely in compliment to you.”

Augusta had for several days felt some anxiety on the subject of the ball, though she had never allowed it to be visible; she danced extremely well, and delighted in  
the

the exercise; but a few private dances were all she had hitherto been present at: a public ball-room was an unknown land, and she looked forward to it with all the glowing anticipations of youth and enthusiasm, longing to enjoy a species of amusement she loved, on its appropriate ground of fairy land, yet afraid of displaying any concern about the matter; in her own mind, she felt assured that the cloud which for several days had shaded her father's open brow, and the impatience of her mother's manner, were both caused by this very ball: yet as neither of them had breathed an objection to her going, or indeed scarce named it at all, she did not feel herself called upon to refuse the highest gratification she could then enjoy.

Still Augusta delayed bringing the question to a point, with a very pardonable timidity; for greatly as she desired to accept the very flattering distinction of making a first appearance under the introduction of the elegant, correct, and fashionable

able lady Belmore, yet a frown from her father, the least appearance of a disapproval, or one word of objection, would have caused her instantly to decline her ladyship's kind offer.

From her mother she had nothing to fear, unless in support of an authority she never allowed to be disputed, for Anna was naturally gay, and always delighted in forwarding any little plan for her children's happiness not inconsistent with the religion her vigorous mind approved, and looked with pride on the blooming, animated girl, who, in her opinion, few could surpass in personal or mental attractions. It was therefore only in compliance to him through whom she heard, saw, and spoke, that Anna ever opposed the innocent enjoyments of her kind and affectionate child; but against that one overwhelming sentiment she had neither argument nor strength to offer.

Augusta felt it extremely difficult to maintain her usual unconcerned gaiety of manner,

manner, or to pour out the tea with her usual steadiness of nerve, when Anna Heathfield playfully asked St. Orme if he should not like to witness the first appearance of Augusta and herself at their new assembly-rooms the next night?

"Are you going then, my dear?" asked St. Orme kindly.

"Yes, indeed; lady Belmore has most handsomely included me in her act of grace; and if you would go with us, we should be the most attractive party in the rooms; and, I am sure, boast the finest guardian papa in it," replied she with playful fondness.

St. Orme patted her glowing cheek, as he returned good-naturedly—"I should look like an old fool there; and it is well if you do not look and feel like young ones, surrounded by so many people you know nothing of."

A servant at this instant brought in a note for Miss St. Orme, highly perfumed, and sealed with a coronet.

"This," said Augusta, "deserves a silver waiter," as opening it she discovered her ticket, sealed with the Belmore arms, her ladyship being one of the lady patronesses, and a polite note, saying lady Belmore would have the pleasure of calling for Miss St. Orme at nine the following evening.

"Very kind and attentive, I am sure," said Mrs. St. Orme.

"Bravo!" shouted Anna Heathfield; "and now, Augusta, for our paraphernalia; what are we to wear?"

"My dress will be simple enough," replied Augusta; "but better than over-dressed; an India muslin frock and satin slip will do there, as it has done at your grand set-outs; Susy and myself must trim up the frock with some of mamma's lovely lace, and a little satin, and I shall do very well."

"No doubt of that, Augusta; and as to ornaments——"

"As to ornaments, you know I do not abound

abound in them; a pearl necklace, and some trifle or other in my hair—a flower perhaps."

"Why a flower, Augusta?" asked her mother: "you have a handsome pearl ornament, and elegant combs; and your beautiful hair requires but little adorning."

"So little, mamma, that you see I was thinking of a flower only; but I shall trust to the taste of the moment."

"Look, Miss Heathfield!" exclaimed Robert, as he came running into the room, "here is a grand note for you. I met Edwin, and he sent it.—And, Augusta, he bade me whisper to you, that a long while since you promised to dance first with him at the next ball you were at; and he claims your promise now."

"Did you bring the newspaper, Robert?" asked St. Orme. "We shall hear of nothing now but dress and folly: I should not object to those things so greatly, were it not for the dissipation of mind they introduce."

"Here, papa, is the newspaper," cried Robert, anxious to turn the current of his uncle's thoughts. "And do you know I met Mr. and Mrs. Miles, who sent their respects to you; and Mr. Miles hopes you will attend the committee-meeting tomorrow morning at eleven; and that you and mamma will be present at a large tea party, to be given in the evening to all the committee dons and their donnas."

"Very well; I knew it before. We shall see, if your aunt is able, we may as well go perhaps," said St. Orme, as taking the paper he retired with it to his own study.

"Heigh-ho!" cried Anna Heathfield, as St. Orme disappeared; "so goes the world! Dissipation, thou hast many appearances; a committee called to do nothing—a select religious tea party, of sixty or seventy good souls, filled with envy and malice, sputtering spleen, and babbling backbiting—turning up their eyes at their betters, and stroking their gills in the

the self-satisfied pride of a pharisee. A charity ball, where young and old meet to dress, dance, and coquet, enjoy a harmless laugh, or quiz their partner; a card-table, where the four honours turn all the blood to gall, or the uproarious mirth of a dozen young people proclaiming the sale of a lucky card, and the emptying of a pool; the idle lounging over a new pamphlet or newspaper, or the devouring of a novel; still, still, under all these, and a thousand other appearances, still art thou dissipation. And dissipation is necessary to existence. Who could live labouring, prosing, or praying for ever? Now, dear Mrs. St. Orme, do not you strive to do what you cannot accomplish, viz. to look angry at what you know to be the simple truth. I will tell you what all those mighty good find-faults remind one of, a fable that Augusta and I used to learn when we trotted away to a day-school together:—a lofty eagle swimming through the air, pounced upon a young hawk that

was just trying its wings—the parent, highly indignant, chattered and raged, until a sparrow flying by, she caught at that—a cat sat purring on the ground, and turned up her eyes in horror at such outrages; as they were again closing, she espied a mouse, and darted on her prey instantly;

A spider who sat in her web on the wall,  
And saw the poor victims, and pitied their fall,  
Cried—“From murders like these how guiltless am I!”  
So ran to regale on a new-taken fly.”

“ And what does it all teach you, my dear Anna,” replied Mrs. St. Orme, “ but that the question—‘ Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye,’ is not faithfully applied so often as it ought to be? and I would say to you, to myself, and to Augusta, ‘ first cast the beam out of thine own eye, then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother’s eye.’ ”

“ Thank

"Thank you, mamma," cried Augusta, "for not preceding your quotation by the epithet hypocrite; but you were too honest for that; you knew we were not hypocrites, did you not?"

"We know very little about ourselves, my child; but hypocrisy is, I believe, the last sin of which you will stand charged; your fearless candour will more often lead you into the opposite extreme," returned the mother, as Robert, starting from his chair, exclaimed—"Well, I don't know that I am free from the sin of hypocrisy, for I was charged with an invitation to Augusta for this tea party; but thinking she would prefer the ball, and rather papa should not know it, I said nothing before him about it, and perhaps never should, if this conversation had not taken place."

"Bless your dear honest little heart," cried Augusta, kissing the boy's fair cheek, "never let your little head be troubled to make my path even: act openly and honourably—tell the truth at all times, and

fear not but Augusta can fight her own way through every difficulty."

At this moment the reverend Mr. Glossit and Edwin Heathfield were announced.

"Mr. Glossit," cried Anna, laughing, "you are come in the very nick of time, to determine a knotty point, which nothing less than a divine can determine."

Mr. Glossit bowed, smiled, and rubbed his hands; should feel honoured in attending to any thing that concerned Miss Heathfield.

"But it does not concern me personally; it is poor Augusta who is in a dilemma," said Anna.

The reverend was very sorry, 'pon honour; should feel more honoured still in being serviceable to Miss St. Orme.

"Humph," cried Anna, "*more honoured*—a little dose of humility that."

"Come down from your stilts, Miss Anna; you only play second fiddle to Augusta."

"Well,

"Well, never mind—now for the question. Come here, Mr. Glossit, for from me you must hear it; Augusta would rather apply to Mrs. Boyer for a solution: this then is the point in dispute, whether Augusta St. Orme shall, on the evening of to-morrow, accept an invitation from a committee of respectable staid gentlemen, and their very excellent wives, all mighty good people, to make tea and sing psalms for them, to which may be added the interesting amusement of taking off shawls and putting on bonnets, for half the hobbling dowagers then present; or whether she shall, on that same evening, repair to the assembly rooms of this good old city, in the fashionable train of lady Belmore, there to amuse herself by dancing, and listening to all the flattering speeches that the naughty men of this naughty age will make her?"

"'Pon honour, Miss Heathfield," simpered the gentleman, "you have put a trying question to me; I would fain de-

fend the men of the present age from the charge you bring against them."

"To the point—to the point!" cried Anna.

"The ball-room would be robbed of half its attraction if robbed of Miss St. Orme's presence; for myself, I would not think of going."

"Oh no; you would make interest for the tea party if she were there."

"Indeed, Miss—"

"A truce to all this senseless *bavardage*," said Augusta, laughing; "how can a place be robbed of what it never had? I never saw the inside of the assembly rooms: but do not look disappointed, Edwin; I will dance with you there to-morrow evening, as gladly as I have before in your own dining-parlour, notwithstanding your sister has chosen to amuse herself at my expence."

Edwin was delighted, and the evening passed swiftly on; Glossit hovered near Augusta, fondled Miriam, and chatted with

Robert

Robert and Gordon; but could scarcely hide his chagrin at the air of perfect *non-chalance* with which Augusta declared herself engaged for the first half of the evening.—“I thought you had only determined on going within the last hour,” said he.

“Very true; of course my engagements are conditional, but they are nevertheless binding,” returned Augusta.

“You will however favour me with your hand for the next set?” resumed he in an imploring voice.

“Oh, certainly, with pleasure, if you then continue to desire it,” replied Augusta, with a doubtful smile.

“If I then continue to desire it, Miss St. Orme! What can you mean? You surely must know—”

“Must know,” interrupted she, “that if this very vehement desire to dance with one with whose proficiency that way you are quite unacquainted, had not been the birth of this evening, you would have

named it before; if then its birth has been so rapid, its death may probably be as sudden."

The appearance of St. Orme, followed by the supper-tray, called off Augusta.

"Your fair daughter is cruel, sir," smiled Glossit, after the first compliments were passed.

"I should not wonder," replied St. Orme coolly; "she is spoiled; indulgence makes a despot, and a despot is cruel."

There were two pair of eyes directed towards him at that moment; their language was the same, and they shone from warm, full hearts—hearts devoted to him. St. Orme saw them not, and it was well he did not, for though they were those dearest to him on earth, even from them he could not bear reproof; St. Orme was the spoiled child of mental indulgence, but knew it not—did not even suspect it.

## CHAPTER X.

Yours the face  
Which early faded through fond care for him,  
Hung o'er his sleep, and duly as heaven's light  
Was there to greet his wakening—smooth'd his couch,  
Caught his last whisper—pressed your lip to his,  
When fever parch'd it—hush'd his wayward cries,  
With patient, vigilant, never-wearied love  
These are woman's tasks; in these her youth,  
And bloom of cheek, and buoyancy of heart,  
Steal from her all unmark'd.      MRS. HEMANS.

THE charity ball passed off as many other charity balls have done; the patrons and patronesses were all smiles and attention, the room crowded, the music good, partners abundant, and Augusta St. Orme delighted. Simply dressed as she had announced, in an India muslin frock and satin slip, with her fine hair tastefully arranged, Augusta looked and moved a perfect

fect gentlewoman, whose tirewomen might have been the Graces themselves. A genuine smile of perfect delight illuminated the fine face of St. Orme as he surveyed the graceful figure of his daughter, and conveyed to her fluttering bosom the ray of sunshine it had before wanted. There were many new faces present that night; but at that period of Augusta's eventful life she was not easily eclipsed; and a countenance more radiant, eyes more intelligent, or a figure more breathing of life and sentiment, was not to be found in the crowd of youth and beauty that surrounded her. To Augusta it was enchantment; the lights, the dress, the busy moving scene, the joyous spirit that every where diffused itself, and the novelty of the scene, kept alive every feeling of enjoyment, through what to many present was a tediously long ball.

As she promenaded the room during the intervals of dancing in lady Belmore's highly-fashionable train, Augusta had no idea that

that the number of eye-glasses levelled at their party were principally directed to her, until Miss Belmore remarked good-naturedly—" You create some sensation here this evening, my dear Miss St. Orme. Some of the belles of the highest ton in the room would give a great deal to obtain half the notice you have done to-night."

Augusta laughed incredulously, and though the remark was often repeated, and circumstances tended to confirm it, preserved her happy easy deportment, free from effort, constraint, or study.

St. Orme received his daughter with a smile as fond as the one with which he had parted from her, and Augusta retired to her bed as fatigued and as happy as youth, exercise, health, and excellent spirits, could make her. She had not, however, slept many hours, when an unusual bustle in the house awoke her. Starting up in alarm, she distinctly heard feet passing and repassing her door, and voices in a sup-

a suppressed tone, as if fearful of disturbing her. The day was just beginning to break on a dull November morning, an hour when Augusta was aware the whole household would have been profoundly silent, as the slightest noise in the morning disturbed her mother's shattered nerves, had not some extraordinary event set them in motion. Augusta's was not a sleepy temperament, and ever alive to her mother's state of health, she doubted not for a moment that some fresh seizure had caused this alarm ; throwing a flannel dressing-gown around her, she hastily left her own room, and flew to that of her mother.

" Oh, you are come, Augusta," cried the agitated parent, who was vainly endeavouring to dress herself with trembling fingers, and panting for breath, " I am glad you are awake, though your father desired that no one should disturb you."

" What is the matter, and where is papa?"

papa?" exclaimed Augusta, who now perceived her father's bed was unoccupied.

"The dear children, Miriam and Gordon, are both extremely ill, and your father is with them. Susy called us. She thinks Gordon dying."

Before the last word was pronounced, Augusta was in the nursery.—"Why, my dear, did you arise?" asked St. Orme, who held his little feverish moaning Miriam in his arms, with all the fond father kindled in his heart; but Augusta replied only by turning from one sick child to the other.

Gordon raised his heavy eyelids, and stretching out his feeble little arms, faintly cried—"Sister!"

The appeal was irresistible. Augusta took him from his nurse's arms, kissed his burning lips, and soon soothed him with the softest lullaby to transient sleep. She dared not speak or move, but her eye rested anxiously on the trembling mother, who, forgetful of herself, was busily

busily employed in procuring comforts for the children. St. Orme's caught the expression. "Be careful of her," whispered Augusta; "she is too frail for exertion: depend on my seeing every thing done for the children."

The fond father, with some difficulty, transferred his fretting child to the nurse, and then succeeded in persuading his Anna to retire until the physician came, as Augusta was there, and Augusta could do every thing—and Augusta did do every thing. She was found by the physician still in her dressing-gown, Gordon in her arms, and Miriam's two hands in hers. He was a friend of the family, who had long attended them, and had often seen with astonishment the extraordinary exertions of Augusta, her wonderful presence of mind, and the constant demand made on her time and talents, which seemed equal to all required from them. He now pronounced the children to have taken the measles (which were then very prevalent), under

under the most unfavourable auspices, and feared there would be some considerable difficulty in bringing them through the illness ; " however," continued he, " we must hope the best, and in the mean time you must take care of yourselves. You, my dear young lady, ought not to be here so clothed. I saw you but a few hours since using exercise in a heated atmosphere. Want of rest, and sudden change, may probably unfit you for the arduous duties you are so industrious in fulfilling."

" She has been here since six this morning," said Mrs. St. Orme; " indeed if she were not here, what should I do ? "

The kind physician was about to speak, but Augusta stopped him.—" Oh, never think of me," she cried; " I am young, and accustomed to nursing and fatigue; I shall do very well; only think of mamma and the children. I am sadly afraid mamma will over exert herself. Keep her quiet, and Susy and I will attend to the children."

The

The physician shook his head.—“ You will be careful of yourself, Mrs. St. Orme, for the sake of this dear girl, as well as on every other account. I will order some little thing for you.” So saying, the friendly doctor withdrew ; but neither Anna nor her daughter spared themselves ; the sick-room was never deserted by them day or night for one moment. The domestic arrangements of the house were not at all neglected ; the same economy was preserved in the kitchen which had ever marked it, and the general appearance of the family was as regular, clean, and orderly as ever.

St. Orme pursued his mercantile concerns ; his heart ached with anxiety on many accounts, but his appearance was that of cheerful—almost gay prosperity. In the bosom of his family he was melancholy, turbid, sometimes even morose, but in the midst of those passions evincing an almost overwhelming love for his family, the cause probably of so much anxiety.

For

For the first few days and nights of illness, Augusta never quitted the nursery, except to attend to some domestic affair in another department, and to assist her mother in rising—a duty she had not for many years neglected or deputed to another; and among the gentlemen who called to inquire for Miss St. Orme after the ball, not a few shrugged their shoulders, and elevated their eyebrows, on being told she was confined to the sick-room of her sister and brother; a deadly stab this to Augusta's ever becoming fashionable; even lady Belmore said that—“ If St. Orme meant his daughter to succeed, he must detach her from such vulgar employ: to do the girl justice, she had grace and manner enough, as well as pride, but they could not expect her to settle well if she were made a nurse or nursemaid.” But here lady Belmore, like many other worldly wise ones, was mistaken. Augusta, although engaged in the various duties of nurse, teacher, house-keeper,

keeper, and presiding genius over her father's elegant house and genteel family, had, without the slightest effort, made a conquest lady Belmore would most gladly have appropriated to one of her own fashionable high-born beauties; and her ladyship was doomed to hear that the senseless Augusta had rejected what her own beautiful Elvira had long sighed and angled for.

From the first day that Gordon and Miriam St. Orme were seized with sickness, the reverend Henry Glossit was assiduous and attentive in his inquiries. He frequently saw Mrs. St. Orme, but Augusta was constantly engaged; he however left her new books, and sent the children every little rarity he could procure, together with toys, story-books, &c.

St. Orme had a decided objection to his children accepting presents from any one, but particularly from Glossit, for whose principles he entertained the most sovereign contempt, bordering on aversion, and of whom he spoke in the most unqualified

lifted terms of disapprobation ; so much so, that Augusta had for several weeks dreaded to see Glossit enter the house, and done all in her power, without being absolutely rude, to make him feel himself unwelcome ; but his smooth polish was not very capable of receiving impression, and hitherto her efforts were vain.

The children had been ill eleven days and nights, five of which Augusta had held waking vigils by the little sufferers' couch ; and for the other six had only slept at intervals on her sister's bed, with the child's feverish hand enclosed in her own. This, added to incessant daily fatigue and watching, had robbed her cheek of its bloom, and dimmed the lustre of her eye. It happened unfortunately that the only two friends who could have been useful to Augusta on this occasion had been prevented : Mrs. Boyer, by the sickness of a sister who lived in another county, and Anna Heathfield by the fear of taking the infection

infection to a numerous fry of young brothers and sisters.

Mr. St. Orme, on entering his nursery, found his eldest daughter at her old post, keeping watch while the children slept. She was reading, and her father entered the room so quietly, that he had been some seconds gazing on her altered looks before she perceived him. A spark of fire lit up her languid eye as she raised it to his much-loved face. He took her hand, saying affectionately—" You look pale and heavy, my love ; this room is too close, and the fatigue of nursing these children too great for you ; the crisis is now past, you must therefore leave them to the servants, for your health is of the most consequence after all. God only knows what we should do if you were ill. I must die with you I believe."

Augusta's bosom swelled, and her eyes filled with tears ; it was the first time that her fatigue or loss of rest had been at all noticed, and her sickly imagination sometimes

times suggested, that were she from mere exhaustion to drop dead, no one would notice it until missed from her post of duty, so greatly had fears for the servant's account outrun those expressed for her; the tenderness however of her father's voice, and the kindness of his looks, told her that she was yet dear—yet an object of care and affection; and pressing his hand to her lips, she replied—"I do not feel very well to-day, but I shall lie down to-night; and if they sleep, I shall, and that will quite restore me: you will see me myself again to-morrow."

" You *shall* lie down, my child!—do you not lie down every night?" cried the father in surprise.

Augusta tried to smile, but the effort was tearful, as she replied—" No indeed; I have sat up five entire nights, and slept but a small portion of the others, since the poor little things have been ill."

" My poor child," rejoined her father, gazing on her pale face with swimming

eyes, "God will reward you—your parents never can."

Augusta could not speak—her heart was full to bursting; but she was happy as mortal can be, as she laid her face on the hand she yet held, and wept the tears of gratified love.

St. Orme bent forwards, and kissed her fair forehead.—" You will come down to tea, my love," said he ; " this confinement must be put an end to : but what are you reading?" at the same time opening the book, " Priestley's Institutes." " Dry amusement, Augusta. But where did you obtain it?"

" Mr. Glossit sent it me, papa. I have some time wished to read it; and I am afraid he took the trouble to send home for it to oblige me."

" It requires but little penetration, Augusta, to see he would do any thing to oblige you; but I wish you would not bring him here so often, nor encourage his attentions. Here is the fool's crest and name

name I see. You should not have allowed him to send for a book for you.

"Come to me, papa—I want you," from the childish voice of Miriam, prevented Augusta replying, which she was not sorry for, feeling indignant at being accused of giving encouragement to a man her father knew she disliked extremely for his principles. Being again desired to appear at tea, Augusta gave her charge into Susy's care, and descended with her mother to the drawing-room, which they found occupied by the two Heathfields and Mr. Glossit. They had not met since the important evening of the ball, and with one accord they deplored poor Augusta's altered looks.

"Well, I think, now that you name it, she does look ill," said Mrs. St. Orme, "and no wonder, poor girl, for she has done too much since this sick affair; but she will not be without her reward."

"Never, my dear mother, while I have your smile to reward me," replied Au-

gusta, as the urn making its appearance she turned towards the tea-table.

"No, no!" exclaimed Anna Heathfield; "if I may not assist you up stairs, I may here; so take that seat on the sofa by the fire.—That is right, Edwin; keep her there in comfort, while I make tea."

Seated on the sofa, between her mother and Edwin, Augusta observed, with a feeling between surprise and anger, the politeness of her father's manners towards Mr. Glossit, who entered into conversation with him on various subjects, and, to appearance, valued his good opinion and judgment.

In the course of the evening an old Latin author being named, St. Orme and Edwin went into the library to seek for it, in order to determine some point in history. Mrs. St. Orme at the same time took Anna away with her, leaving Augusta alone with Mr. Glossit.—"I saw Robert this afternoon," said that gentleman, taking a seat on the sofa close by  
Augusta.

Augusta. " I thought you would be pleased to hear the little fellow was well, so rode over to see him."

" You are very kind, Mr. Glossit; but why give yourself so much trouble? Robert is sure to be happy any where; and his nurse is very fond of him. Poor child, I am glad he has escaped this malady."

" Nothing, my dear Miss St. Orme, that can in the slightest degree contribute to your comfort, can be indifferent to me; my whole life devoted to it would be but too happily spent; I should ask no other heaven than your society and smile."

Augusta smiled archly, as she replied—  
" Is this the heaven *you* preach? You a supporter of the liberal doctrines of——"

" Of nothing," interrupted he, vehemently, " but what you love and esteem;" and here followed a passionate declaration of ardent warm attachment, of never-dying love, founded on the truest esteem for her character, with an offer of his hand and fortune, with perfect devotion; and the

only boon he asked was, to be allowed to woo and wed her.

Augusta was not altogether unprepared for this, yet she felt agitated and grieved, while she assured him of her gratitude, and implored him to believe it was all she could ever offer him in return for his noble offers; but Glossit was not easily repulsed—he really loved Augusta, and assured her he should feel more happy with her gratitude, than with the love of any other woman on earth; and it was with the utmost difficulty she could persuade him that she would never marry any man for whom she felt no warmer sentiment than gratitude, feeling as she did that her heart was capable of exclusive devotion.

The return of Mrs. St. Orme put an end to his solicitations, and Augusta withdrew to look on her sick charge. On her return to the drawing-room the whole party were there, and she felt it somewhat indelicate in Glossit to remain—"But what," thought she, "can an infidel minister of the gospel

gospel know of delicacy—he who lives in the open defiance of truth—he who has sacredly sworn to do and to believe that of which he is ignorant and denies? Love and honour such a man! impossible!—suffer him to lay the flattering unction to his soul, of thinking I may yet do so—forbid it every principle of truth and honesty! Oh no, let me enjoy my inward peace, then welcome weal or wo—I shall still be myself."

This self-communing had lent a tinge to the pale cheek, and a fire to the eye of Augusta, as she sat back on a sofa. Glos-sit observing it, mistook the cause, and leaning over the back of the sofa, whispered—"Will you permit me to lay my petition before your father, Miss St. Orme?"

"If you wish for a second refusal, sir; my father will not urge me to accept you, and I am unalterable," replied she, with mild dignity, but in a tone of decision that convinced him nothing more could

be done for the present, than bow to her behests, which he did, by immediately taking his leave.

"I have a great curiosity, Augusta," said Edwin Heathfield, as Glossit left the room, "to know what you have been saying to that poor man, for he is terribly unnerved by it, and not quite sure whether he shall laugh or cry."

"He has my entire permission to do either, or to amuse himself and you in any way he may think proper, with this one injunction, to make his visits more like those of angels, short and far apart."

"And you have told him so, Augusta?"

"Why, something very much like it; but I allow of no questions from young men, so rest satisfied that I did not say one word to Mr. Glossit which you would like said to yourself, and ask no more."

Anna rising at that moment to depart, her brother could only reply to Augusta with his eyes, and they for the first time conveyed a suspicion to the newly-awakened

kened perception of Augusta, that made her start, blush, and turn deadly pale in the same instant.

"Heyday! what are those changes indicative of?" cried Anna. "Why, Augusta, we shall have you worse than the children soon—dying in that interesting complaint, a consumption. Go to bed, child, and sleep until you are well. Good night, and pray let me see no more of those crimson and death changes."

Augusta felt an unusual weight on her spirits, and a nervous trepidation to which she was quite unaccustomed. She would gladly have unbosomed herself to her mother before she slept; but that parent was so far from well, and so desirous of being left to quiet repose, that she delayed the communication, and retired to her little bed in the nursery, where fatigue soon wrapped every faculty in sleep, and both Glossit and Edwin were forgotten.

The following day was so fully occupied in domestic duties, that the events of the

preceding evening were scarcely remembered by Augusta, until her mother came into the room where she was sitting with the now almost convalescent children, bringing with her a small basket of remarkably fine grapes.

"Those are not from our own garden, I think, mamma," said Augusta, as her mother gave large clusters to the invalids.

"No," replied Mrs. St. Orme, "they are part of a present from Mr. Glossit; he received them this morning from his own hothouse, and sent them here immediately. He really is a very gentleman-like attentive young man, and if he were any thing *but a clergyman*, one should feel less disgust at his foolish philosophy and lax principles of religion."

"Perhaps he may do less mischief as a clergyman than he would as a private gentleman," replied Augusta; "it is some check on the promulgation of his ridiculous opinions; then they appear so much more heinous in a man whose appearance proclaims

proclaims a divine commission, that the most careless or irreligious person must see their enormity, if not before infected by them; then we may charitably and reasonably hope, that his curate, who, it appears, is more than half his time left alone with his parishioners, is an honest man—a man at all events who believes in the truth and divinity of the Bible he uses, and the doctrines it teaches."

" Still, my dear Augusta, such opinions are the more revolting as coming from a man of his sacred profession, and almost disgust one with the very name of clergyman."

" I allow all that, mamma, at least the first part of your assertion; and therefore it is that I think he will do *less* mischief than he probably would as a private gentleman, when his very plausible manners, and his fine person, would perhaps add strength and persuasion to his argument. Even your firm virtues unbend

M 6 sufficiently

sufficiently to allow your acceptance of his grapes and numerous delicacies——”

“ Nay, Augusta,” interrupted her mother, “ it is only as your acquaintance that the man is at all tolerated here; you know his character is detestable to me; and your father is often angry at his visits.”

“ Yet, mamma, who is it that presses his stay, enters into argument with him, appears delighted with his conversation, and sorry to part with him? It would be very difficult to persuade Glossit that papa dislikes his visits, though I often tremble for fear he should absolutely insult him the next time they meet.”

“ Your papa is too good, and too much a gentleman, to insult any one bearing the badge Mr. Glossit does; but his visits are, nevertheless, disagreeable to both of us. There is a letter from him for you below—I really forgot to bring it up—to ask for some book, or some such nonsense, I suppose.”

“ I should have been better pleased if  
he

he had withheld both letter and grapes," said Augusta, as a servant placed the letter in her hand; which having hastily run over, and perceiving that both the children had fallen asleep, she put into her mother's hands, saying, with a smile — "After all you have said against him, mamma, I suppose you would not choose Mr. Glossit for a son-in-law."

"No, indeed, Augusta; and if I would receive him, your father never would: it was only last night, after we were in our rooms, that he declared he would much rather see you laid in your grave, than the wife of Glossit, notwithstanding his great property."

"Well, my dear mamma, I am glad to hear our tastes, judgments, or what you please to call it, are so much alike; it is not my intention at present to let him see me either a corpse or Mrs. Glossit."

Mrs. St. Orme carefully read the long epistle, postscript and all; it professed an abundance of love, esteem, and even reverence,

rence, and was couched in excellent language, adorned with all the flowers of rhetoric, imploring her to reverse her decree of the preceding evening, and declaring it his fixed determination to persevere, in the humble hope of one day becoming more agreeable to the only woman he ever did, or ever could love.

"A flaming epistle truly, Augusta; but how came you not to mention his *pennant* before?" asked Mrs. St. Orme.

"There is but little credit in talking of such nonsense," returned Augusta, with feeling. "It was, however, my desire to have told you all that passed between us last night, had you been able to receive me. This morning I had determined never to name it to any one, but the grapes, and this long letter, announcing his determination to persevere, induced me to alter my plan."

"In a worldly point of view, it would be a very advantageous match for you, my dear Augusta; but as I hope you have

have no feeling of tenderness for him, I should be sorry to barter your prospect of immortal happiness for mere temporal good," said Mrs. St. Orme, affectionately.

Augusta kissed her cheek, as she replied—"Dismiss the subject from your mind, my dear mamma ; the man has paid me the highest compliment it was in his power to pay, and therefore deserves civility from me ; but all the riches of the East would not make him a husband for Augusta St. Orme ; therefore forbear to call him great—he only boasts a large estate, and without that estate I feel myself far his superior, whose narrow soul, peeping through its clay tenement, sees the boundary of its hopes encircled by yon murky cloud, and dares not look beyond it. Oh no, I'll have none of him.

‘ Let a broad stream with golden sands  
Through all his meadows roll,  
He's but a wretch with all his wealth,  
Who wears a narrow soul.’

Mrs. St. Orme smiled.—“None need  
fear

fear for you, Augusta, I believe; you will be quite sufficient for yourself. I think, however, we had better not mention this foolish affair to your papa; he will perhaps be annoyed with it; and we need not add to his vexations. Write to Glossit, and if possible give him a *quietus*."

## CHAPTER XI.

Amidst the various scenes of ills,  
Each stroke some kind design fulfils ;  
And shall I murmur at my God,  
When sovereign love directs the rod ?  
Peace, rebel thoughts ! I'll not complain,  
My Father's smiles suspend my pain ;  
Smiles—that a thousand joys impart,  
And pours the balm that heals the smart.

COTTON.

A VERY short time fully restored the children of St. Orme to health, and Augusta to her former state of joyous, delighted occupation ; it mattered not that her privations were numerous, her duties abundant and arduous, and the tempers with whom she had to deal so variable, that obeying the command of to-day was to-morrow treated as a crime ; still Augusta preserved the unbroken line of duty, assiduously

duously strove to improve her own mind, seized with avidity every flower that blossomed in her path, and upheld by inward religion, stepped lightly over the thorns which intercepted her way, and was happy.

Sometimes a strong feeling, not unmixed with bitterness, would rush in full tide through her heart; but that heart was not formed for bitterness nor unkindness—the feeling was wild and suffocating, but short; for, repressed and kept under by the stronger sentiments of duty and religion, it had no room to extend itself or its influence.

The only thing that agitated her strong mind and peaceful bosom at this time, was the result of her desultory and highly-improper reading; nearly all the works to which so much of the misery that deluged France, and spread itself over all Europe, has been ascribed, had been attentively read, and well understood, by Augusta; and it would be saying too much to say, that such a mass of false reasoning and infidelity

fidelity had not been injurious to her; the arguments used by those specious writers are calculated to mislead and dazzle minds of larger calibre than any girl of seventeen can boast, however previously fortified by the pure religion of the Bible. Her French friends, who placed many of these volumes in her hands, though they talked with horror of Robespierre and his *sans culottes*, and deplored that state of things from which they suffered so much, still spoke in raptures of their authors and philosophers, nor appeared to entertain an idea that the promulgation of such sentiments and opinions as they uttered had in any way caused the desolation they deplored.

The very cheerfulness with which these *émigrées* bore their reverse of fortune argued in favour of the new doctrines; it was evidently not the religion of the Bible that sustained them—"What then," asked Augusta, "is this unseen power? philosophy! the philosophy of Voltaire and his

his compeers!" She listened to the many arguments urged by the disciples of the new faith, and not unfrequently, though very erroneously, fancied her father internally a convert to those opinions, from the train of argument he adopted and supported with violent declaimers against it. She thus listened, read, and thought, with the inexperience and insufficiency of her age; endeavouring to reconcile what appeared irreconcileable, until doubt so closely followed doubt, that reason almost tottered on her throne, and the Bible became a fearful book.

It was in this state of mind Mrs. Boyer found her youthful friend on her first return, after a five years' absence. It was to the judicious counsel, and clear representations of this lady, who alone possessed the power of drawing forth the secret poison from her mind, that Augusta owed her salvation from the mists of error and scepticism, which were fast spreading their influence over her understanding. - From

Mrs.

Mrs. Boyer, Augusta received some of her clearest and best instructions on religious subjects, from her lips she gleaned the words of wisdom and of truth, and to her, and her alone, could open the hidden stores of that capacious mind whose strength she yet knew not, and whose powers were yet untried.

By Mrs. Boyer's assistance, those stores were cleared of much improper matter; still there remained the seeds of scepticism, sown by a masterly and unsparing hand, and they would at times send up shoots so vigorous, that the strong plants of religious truth which had taken deep root there were crowded, and almost choked, by the hardy and pernicious weeds thus sprung up among them; but Providence was ever watchful over Augusta, and some means or other was always provided, by which she was taught to distinguish between the weeds of vice and the flowers of immortal bloom.

“I have been paying a melancholy, but useful

useful visit," said Mrs. Mansell, an old lady who did much good among those wretched beings, who having spent their "life's short day" in the precarious career of meretricious vice, are left by their betrayers, and those who have participated in their guilt, to starve and die in neglect and despair.

Mrs. St. Orme, who, though kind and charitable, had less compassion for such sufferers than for any others, knowing Mrs. Mansell's peculiar track of charity, hastily replied—"Some fallen star, I suppose? were you a widow, I suspect your house would be converted into a Magdalen hospital."

"It may be applied to many worse purposes than that," resumed the old lady, in a tone of slight reproof; "surely, since a Magdalen was one of the immediate objects of our Lord's compassionate attention, his followers should feel themselves honoured by being made useful to a fallen sister,

sister, in any way that circumstances may afford them occasion."

"I beg your pardon," rejoined Mrs. St. Orme: "I know you have long followed that which is right most consistently; but it is the weakness of my heart, to feel less charity for those poor creatures than perhaps I ought to feel, since I need so much mercy myself."

"The object of my visit this morning," replied Mrs. Mansell, with her usual benignity, "is indeed 'a fallen star,' one that shone brightly, and lured many to destruction—no other than the famous Sophia South.—Augusta, you must see her; she offers a fine commentary on the prevailing doctrines of freethinking and pleasure. I should like Frances Seymour to see her, for that girl is surely bitten by the raging mania of infidelity."

"And do you think me a little infected likewise, my dear madam, that you propose this visit?" asked Augusta, with a smile.

"God

"God forbid, my dear girl," returned the old lady with fervour, "that I should have such an idea! but I know you read a great deal, and there are few modern works that do not tend that way; beside, you have acquaintance who are disciples of the new school, and French acquaintance; and, in short, such sights are always useful to young people."

Augusta thanked her old friend, and promised to accompany her the following day to the house of wo.

Mrs. St. Orme would not openly oppose this plan, but in her heart she disliked it. She thought too much of her daughter's time was already occupied in visiting the sick and the wretched; and though she could not point out any thing neglected by Augusta, or complain of want of personal attention, yet she thought it was endangering her health, and spending her money in a way not required from her.

But why *not required*, Augusta could not understand; to her it appeared a sacred

cred duty to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, and to speak comfort to the sick and distressed; she therefore, without attempting to discover the real causes, hidden under this appearance of careful solicitude for health, which in other cases never obtained a thought, cheerfully pursued her own independent and unostentatious path of active duty, locking in her own bosom the gratitude and happiness which often filled it even to bursting, and which proved her rich reward for this species of usefulness.

The irritability of Mrs. St. Orme's temper would not be repressed on seeing her daughter's more than usual assiduity in the performance of her domestic affairs; the dispatch with which she arranged her housekeeping and her teaching business, gave one sufficient employ one way, and the other in another, administered her mother's medicine, placed her books, work, and comforts within reach, and having done all, departed with a gay aspect and firm

step, not appearing to see or feel the vexatious contradictions and incessant hindrances which had been thrown in her way, though they cut keenly into her proud and affectionate heart.

Augusta's knowledge of the lost and dying Sophia South was doomed to root out the last remains of doubt and scepticism from her mind ; from that time nothing ever possessed the power of casting a shade over her clear views of revealed religion ; she stood its champion and defender ; and when in after years the waves of affliction beat heavily against her, and temptation beset her on every side, she placed her foot firmly on the rock of faith, and breast-ed the heavy billows with unshaken fortitude, knowing her trust was not in vain.

Sophia South was a native of the city in which she was dying, and born in a rank of life above mediocrity. She was unfortunately from her birth a decided beauty ; her face, her form, her movements, were all perfection, but religion formed no part

of

of her education ; and as her mind was left uncultivated, it became a waste of weeds. She was however highly accomplished, and was more careful on her father's death not to swell her beautiful eyes by weeping, than to inquire how his orphan family were to be provided for, now that their chief support was taken from them. Under these circumstances, it is not wonderful that Sophia soon fell a victim to the arts of seduction ; the blandishments of her own heart spreading a veil over the enormity of crime, and the dread of wanting that luxury of dress and appetite natural to her habits, breaking the slender ties that virtue held over her.

Sophia accompanied her seducer to Paris, and in that vortex of folly and vice, every remaining principle of modesty, virtue, or honour, was swallowed up ; her surpassing wit and beauty gave her eclat, and at that melancholy period in the declension of all virtuous sentiment, she became the popular idol of the day, the en-

vied property of succeeding favourites; in the revolutionary hemisphere she shone a star of magnitude, and "*La belle Angloise*" was long remembered as outshining every rival goddess of love and liberty in that dissolute age and place. But the vicious have no friends. Sophia became offensive to some of the sanguinary despots to whose pleasures she had ministered, and was denounced. With incredible difficulty she effected an escape, and landed on her native shore in the dress of a French sailor, with a constitution already broken, and the whole of her property on her back. For a short time her foreign manners, and still beautiful person, procured her the precarious protection of the libertine or debauchee; but her guilty career was very brief. At twenty-five, the once lovely Sophia lay a disgusting spectacle of the ravages made by vice—dying unsheltered, unfriended, on the broad pavement of a fashionable street in the gay city of Bath; from thence the parish officers

officers conveyed her to her home, where, supported by a few Christians and a little parochial aid, Augusta found her on a humble pallet, consuming by slow decay. It was the horror of this dying bed, the utter desolation of that mind, and the agony with which she would look around, and call on her false gods for strength, then starting, proclaim their infamy, and with bitter sorrow bewail their insufficiency, and execrate the demons that led her in triumph to the depths of perdition, and left her there to the mercy of fiends less cruel than themselves, that taught her to believe this life was the boundary of her soul's empire, and then crowded this life with misery and contempt—this it was that, discovering to Augusta the utter incapacity of every thing not of God to bestow comfort or confer happiness, to guide to the paths of virtue, or lead therein, fixed her wavering mind, confirmed her in pure, undefiled religion, and sent her a sincere suppliant to the Throne of Mercy.

For weeks the wretched Sophia lingered—sometimes in humble penitence, sometimes in rebellious complainings, and sometimes even seeking comforts from the broken cisterns of worldly vanity in the limited extent now within her reach. But notwithstanding these discouraging appearances, and undismayed by sarcasm or irritability, Augusta continued her visits of charity and mercy. Seated by the sufferer's humble pallet, she would select passages of Holy Writ calculated to alarm, to awaken, or console, as the state of her half-awakened mind seemed to require, and follow them up by the honest advice of her own conscience and judgment, or the appropriate writings of some pious author. She lent her such books as she thought might be rendered useful to her; and though frequently she found them displaced for some frivolous work of vanity, with a silent prayer she again renewed her Christian labour, and added to it so many little personal attentions and comforts, that Sophia

phia watched the hour of her coming as the cordial drop in her bitter cup of life and wo, and loved her with all the affection her seared heart was capable of receiving. Little would any one who had met Augusta, with her elegant and even fashionable exterior, and even heard her animated and gay address, and had seen the play of youth and vivacity that diffused itself around her, have supposed the earnestness of appeal with which she had just been urging the cause of religion, the tears she had just been shedding over a dying sinner, or the warmth of her prayers in behalf of that sinner; so unlike was the active Augusta of Sophia's sick room, and the lofty, somewhat proud Augusta of general society, and so little do appearances announce the real state of heart or sentiment.

Mrs. St. Orme could not, though anxious for the poor creature's salvation, so far overcome her prejudice, as to listen with interest—scarcely with patience, to

her daughter's description of Sophia's fitful, desolate state, or to see, without dis-taste, any little preparations for her com-fort or ease; Augusta therefore seldom named her *protégée*, and as much as pos-sible kept every thing from view that would bring her to remembrance; but some unavoidable notice of her had sadly twisted the temper of Mrs. St. Orme one evening, when a gentleman and his daugh-ter unexpectedly called to take tea, and sit an hour or two. They were persons who considered themselves as removed by their superior sanctity to a sphere far above their original one, which indeed would not have claimed for them the acquaintance of Mr. St. Orme's family, and now it appear-ed they were bestowing an honour by their presence.

These pious and dignified personages scarcely deigned to notice Augusta farther than by a cast-up eye, and audible sigh, partaking rather of the groan, as her fine figure and fashionable appearance met their

their gaze ; but to the master and mistress of the mansion they were rather more condescending and courteous—still, however, maintaining an apostolic air of protection and superiority over their less pious brethren. In the course of conversation, Mrs. St. Orme made some allusions to Augusta's habits of visiting the sick and poor, hinting at the same time at the cost of time and money such practices demanded. Augusta could scarcely refrain from smiling, when she recollect ed that in her whole life she had never yet been mistress of a guinea, that had not some specific use—the contents of her purse seldom exceeding a few shillings ; and that more employ was crowded into her time than occupied half her acquaintance ; she, however, made no remark, and the good man, turning up his eyes, hoped—“The young lady would not let that which was the proper work of an elder, call off her mind from the duties appropriate to young women, but that she

would humbly sit at the feet of more advanced Christians, and learn of them.”

Mrs. St. Orme hastily replied, that she had no cause of complaint in Augusta, on the score of usefulness, for very few did so much or so well; but that she had lately spent much time and trouble on a young woman of most abandoned character, from whom no possible good could be derived.

“Very wrong indeed—a great trial for you, my dear friend,” groaned father and daughter in concert. Augusta felt her cheeks tingle, but was silent, as the man continued—“It is a fearful thing to hold converse with those poor outcasts of God and man; even men of my piety should then stand on their guard, and let their communications be yea, yea, and nay, nay.”

“I am of your opinion, sir,” replied Augusta, with an accent which required all the self-sufficiency of the being she spoke to be misunderstood; he however appeared

appeared to consider it a compliment, and smoothing his brow, resumed — “ That shews your sense, Miss, and you will perceive readily how improper it is for an unconverted person like yourself, who frequently go into the tents of the ungodly, to presume to visit the sick; if you have any thing to bestow, give it to me, or to some other pious man, and it shall be properly employed. Now what can you talk to this lost undone sinner, that you pain your good mother’s mind by visiting—what, I say, can you, a gay trifler, talk to her about? Instead of the thunders of the law, you, I suppose, read her pretty love-tales.”

“ The tales I sometimes read to her are, one of seven devils being cast out of Magdalen, and another relating to a woman being brought before Christ, charged with crime—he desired those who were without sin to cast the first stone at her; but the one I most admire, and that we talk most about, relates to a *publican* and a *pharisee*;

*a pharisee*; and *you*, sir, will do well to study it also," replied Augusta, with a dignity and emphasis that imposed silence on her little audience; she then bowed, and slowly left the room.

"A very clever self-willed young lady that," said the good man, when he saw she was fairly out of hearing.

"A very rude one, I think," said the daughter.

"You should pity and pray for her, my dear—she is unconverted—pray that she may be made like as you are," rejoined the father, while an emphatic "God forbid!" uttered in a suppressed voice, reached his ear; but turning round, the fair head of Robert, bending over a book, alone met his view, and not supposing such an expression would dare to burst from his lips, the pious man easily persuaded himself he had been mistaken.

Mrs. St. Orme, in an apologetic tone, defended her daughter from the charge of rudeness, adding that Augusta was so little

tle used to the language of reproof, that even from his lips it sounded harsh and ungracious to her; but the man, who like all his cast was narrow-minded, ignorant, and insolent, talked so much about sparing the rod and spoiling the child, withholding to chastise, neglecting to correct, and omitting to punish, that St. Orme quitted the room to save his temper; and Mrs. St. Orme, urged to the utmost, begged leave to remark—"That the management of their family was their own care—a care to which her husband and herself were fully competent; though she had no doubt the liberal education and exalted sentiments of their children, differed so widely from the children of such persons as Mr. Powell, that he intended to be instructive, where unfortunately he was unprepared to advise."

This was a high stand, which Mrs. St. Orme did not often assume with her friends, but it was one which she well knew how to maintain; and Mr. Powell finding

finding his own position no longer tenable, shook hands with his smiling but offended hostess, and uttering an ejaculatory benediction, led off his sour-faced daughter, brimful of envy, malice, and ill-will, towards the haughty Augusta, and not very placable towards her parents. It was the same evening, that St. Orme, after eating a hearty supper with his wife and Augusta, suddenly complained of violent pain ; all the usual domestic remedies were immediately resorted to, but without the least success. The pain increased, the pulse rose rapidly, and fever spread itself through every vein, while alarm filled every heart in the house. Mrs. St. Orme, rising above all her own complaints, flew from room to room, applied various remedies, and gave a thousand contradictory orders ; but it was now that Augusta's presence of mind, firmness of nerve, and active experience, were invaluable ; it was now too that her newly-acquired confidence in unerring Wisdom stood in firm support

support against the fears and agonies of a heart that doated on a parent, now to every human appearance about to be taken from her at a stroke! The usual medical attendant was immediately there, but Augusta's quick eye soon discovered doubt and dismay in his countenance.—“It will not do,” cried she, bending over her father—“we must have other advice; who shall I send for? have you, my dear papa, a choice?” “It is too late, my child—prepare yourself to see me die,” groaned the suffering parent.

“Say not so,” returned she—“the hand that afflicts can restore as suddenly; say then who shall I summon? no time I know must be lost.”

“He shall not die but live,” murmured the agitated, distracted, but energetic wife. “Send, Augusta, this moment for doctor Ford—he is the only man at such an extremity.”

St. Orme was fondly loved by his whole household,

household, and at this moment not a tearless eye could have been found among them. Every one was eager to serve, and felt as if their own lives would have been well disposed of to prolong his.—“ Fly !” cried Augusta, to the serving lad who received her orders ; and without a hat the boy flew from the house in search of a physician, who then stood preeminent in his profession—and in an incredibly short time returned with the excellent old man, through the driving sleet of a December midnight.—“ My dear young lady,” returned he to Augusta’s anxious looks, rather than words, “ there does exist the shadow of a hope—it is no more, but we will cling to that. Would it be possible to get your mother to bed ? she is hysterical.”

“ My mother to bed while my father is dying !” exclaimed Augusta ; “ my dear sir, you know her not—there is her post, and from it nothing but death will remove her : but fear not—she will neither faint nor quail in the hour of danger ; lose no

time

time in talking—give your orders, and think of none but my father, let me beseech you!"

The old gentleman turned an eye of astonishment on the heroic girl—"Your father deserves to live, and shall, if skill and affection can save him," cried he.

"God bless you for that!" ejaculated she, as in obedience to his command she flew to hasten the preparation of a bath; and through that dreadful night and following day, doctor Ford had ample opportunity of witnessing the unshaken fortitude, the never-tiring assiduity, the prompt activity, the presence of mind, and unbending firmness, with which devoted affection and true religion could arm its votaries.

It was during this awful period, while the two doctors were withdrawn to consult, that Augusta heard from her dying father, that the whole property he should leave would be insufficient to support her mother and the younger children.—"As for

for you, Augusta," continued he, "you must provide for yourself, and supply my place to your mother and the children, as far as watchful tenderness and care can do so. If Edward were but as old as you, I could die content; but, poor fellow, he is too young to be any thing but trouble to you.—For you, my poor Anna—"

"Think not of me," interrupted she—"we shall never be separated; you will yet be spared, or I shall be permitted to share your grave."

St. Orme faintly smiled, and shook his head.—"We must part," resumed he.—"Augusta, to you I commit them all, and you to God! he will be your father and friend; he will never let you need a comforter, nor the means of subsistence—in this firm belief I die content."

Augusta, pale and cold as marble, heard this, as she then thought, dying charge of her adored father, with a tearless eye—and changed the position of his pillow with a tolerably steady hand; yet her heart

heart bled at every pore, and ached with intensity of wo: but this was the time of action ; Augusta still entertained hope, and feeling was kept under by the strong hand of religion. One only sight would have unnerved her, and from that she carefully withdrew herself. Miriam and Gordon were kept completely from view; their artless tears and helpless childhood would have subdued all the firmness of mother and daughter; and Robert, thus doubly an orphan, presented before their eyes images of overwhelming calamity.

At the end of the fourth day something approaching to hope gleamed faintly across their horizon; the almost idolized husband and father still lived, and that circumstance of itself inspired hope; the disorder too had abated of its violence, and the medical men spoke a little more cheerfully; it was hoped that could St. Orme be supported through his weakened state without access of fever, he might recover, but it would be slowly and with great

great difficulty. Sustained by this gleam, Mrs. St. Orme and Augusta performed prodigies of watching, fatigue, and nursing, though their courage was often almost overset by the frequent changes and relapses in the state of their beloved patient.

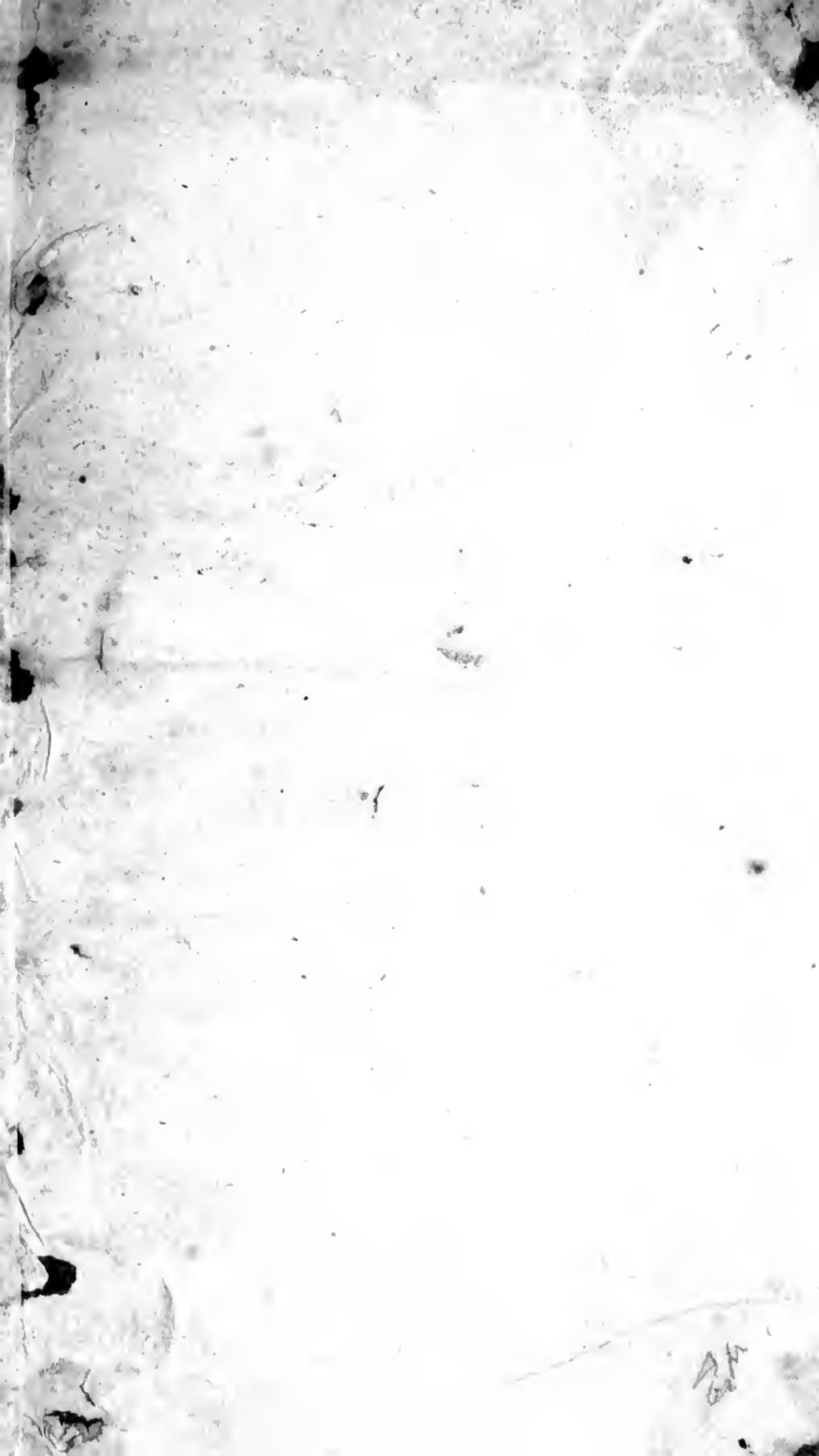
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